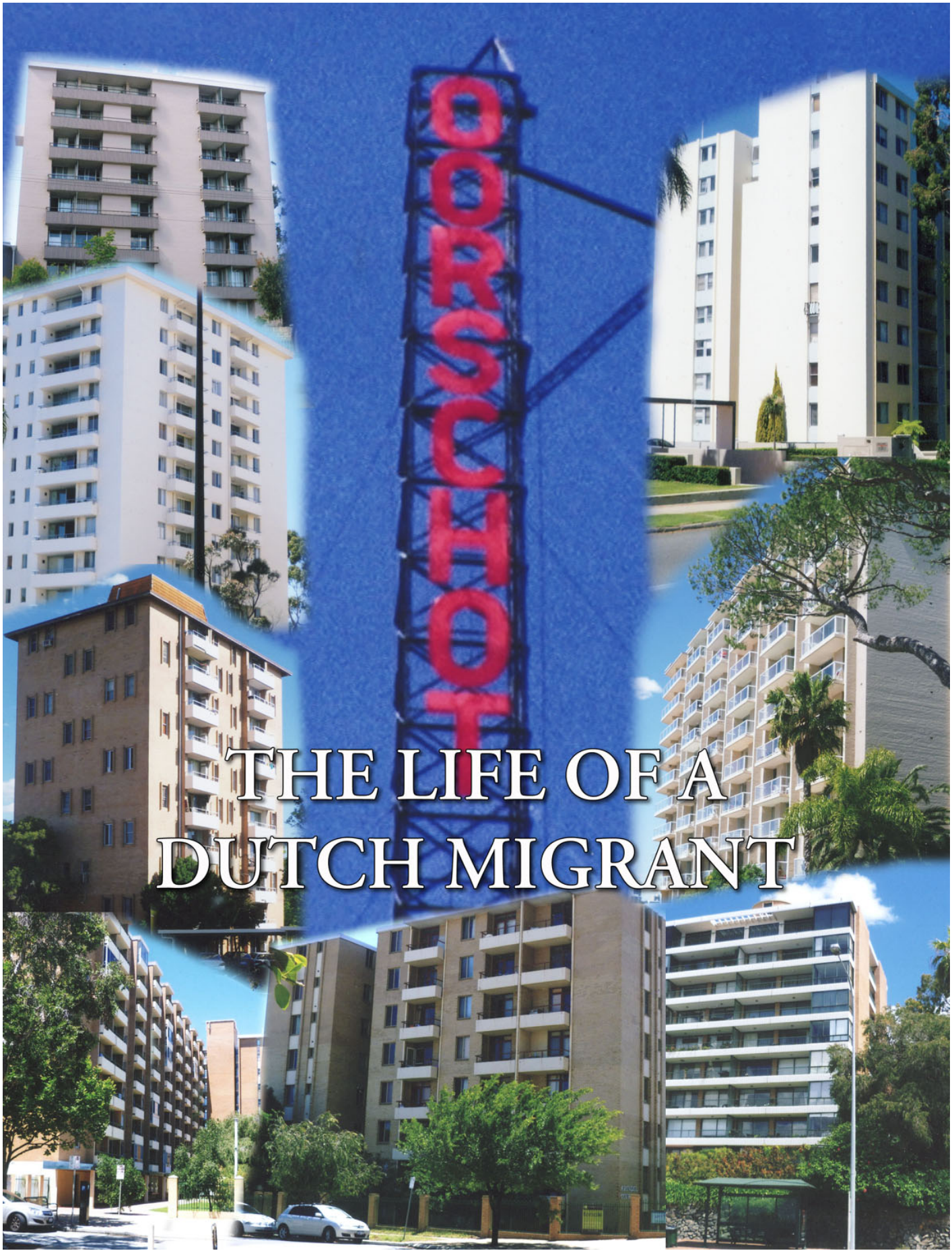


THE LIFE OF A DUTCH MIGRANT

THE LIFE OF A DUTCH MIGRANT

HENK OORSCHOT

First Published 2012

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Some family members who have helped me in refreshing my memories.

My thanks go to all the foremen who worked for me and made a contribution to my success.

Jeff Dittrich and Success Print for their excellent service and assistance in producing the finished aaticle.

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DEDICATIONS

I dedicate this book to the memory of my Dad and Mum, Theo and Sjaan Oorschot, for having the courage to take all of us to a better country.

I dedicate this book to my loving wife Riet for standing with me despite the difficult times we had and providing me with those eight great sons.

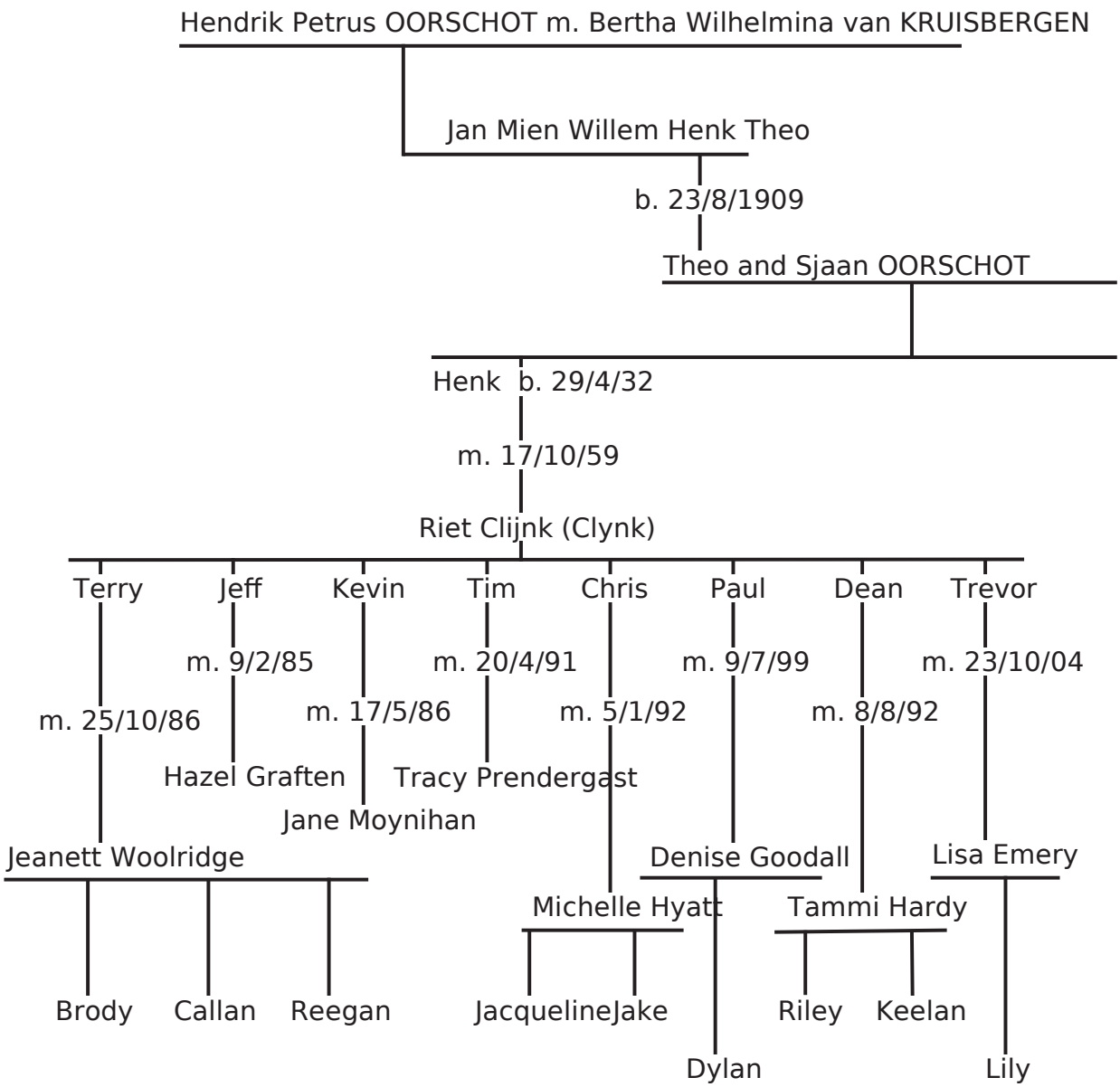
I dedicate this book to those eight sons who have given us so much joy and inspiration along the way.

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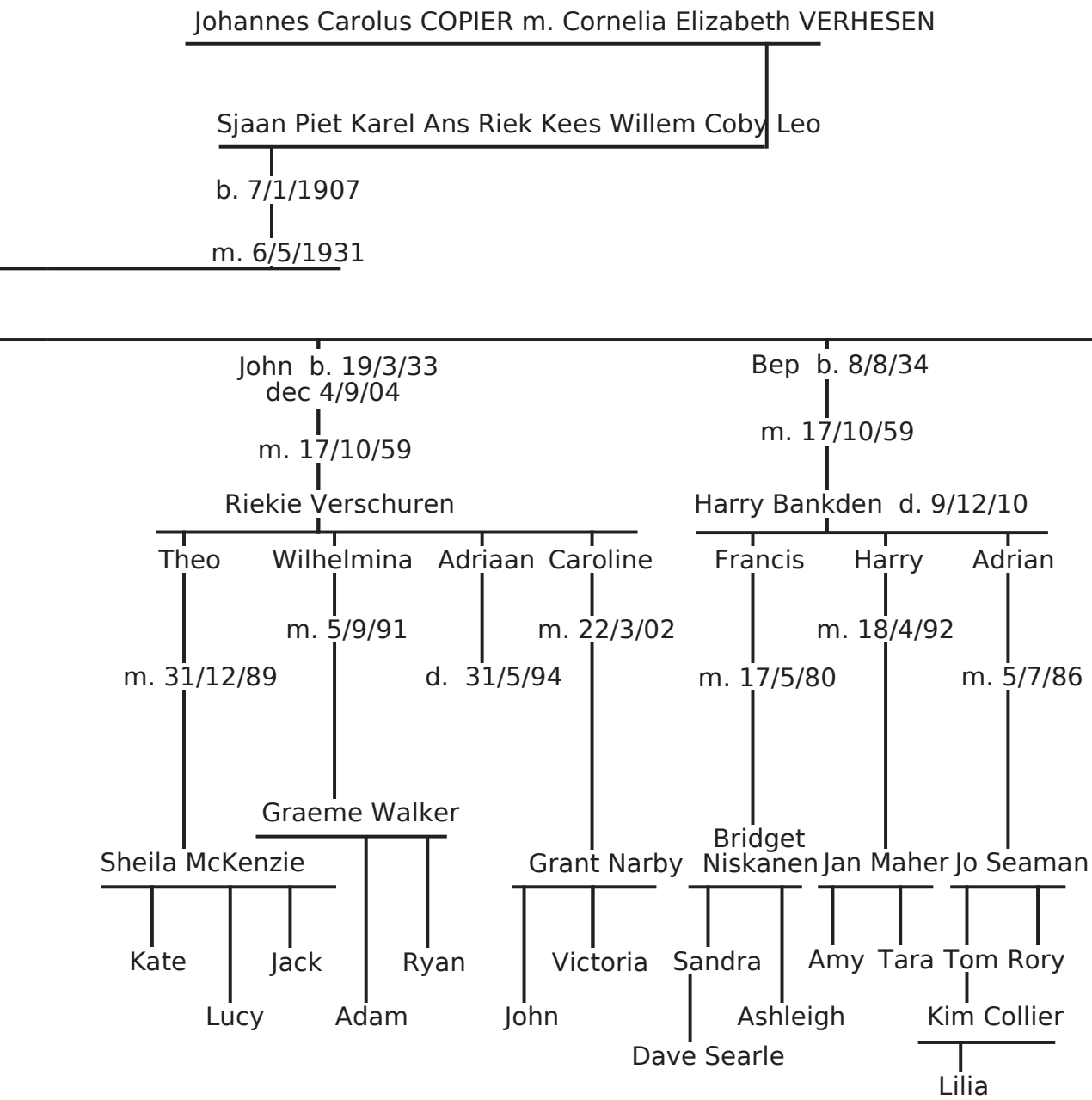
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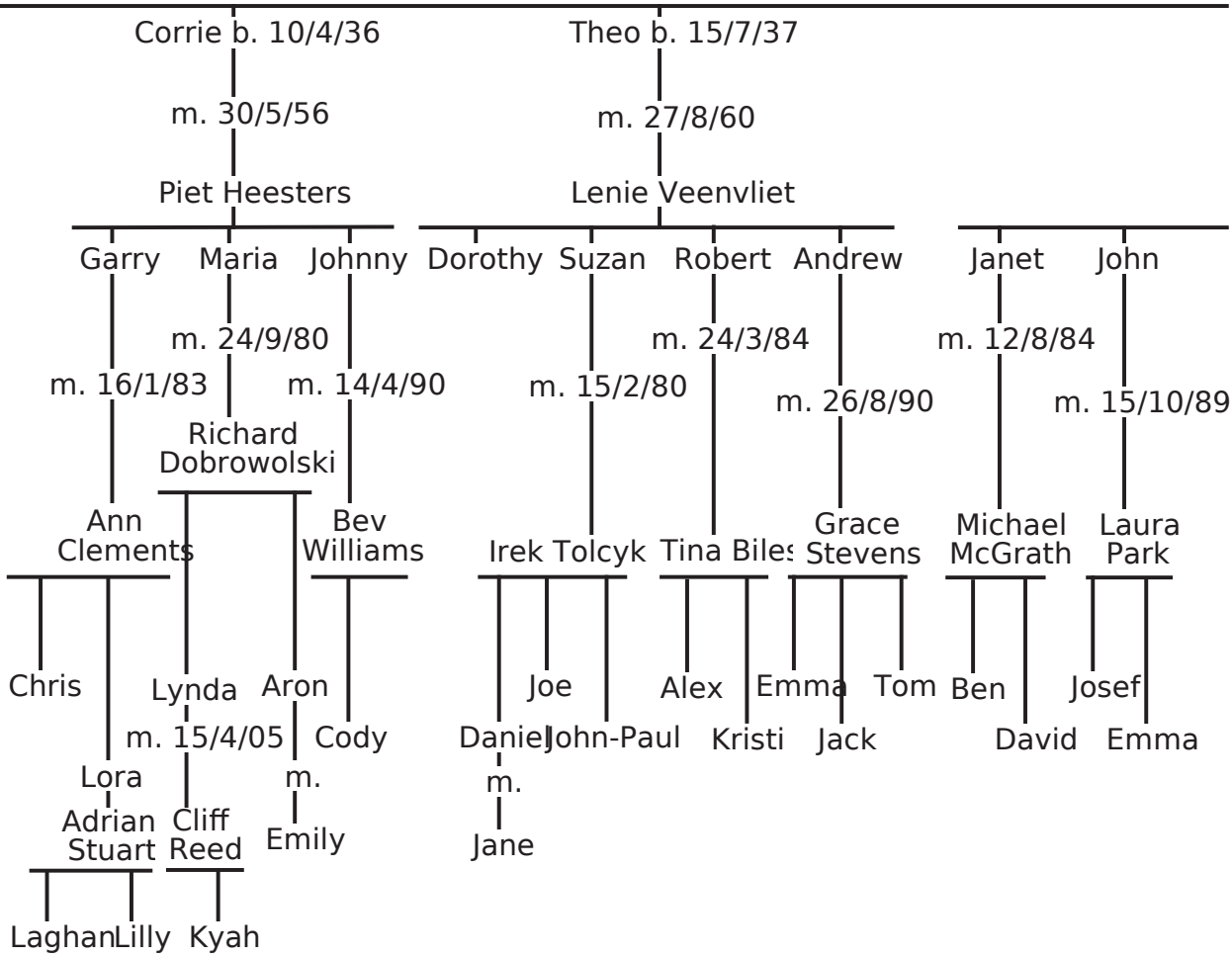
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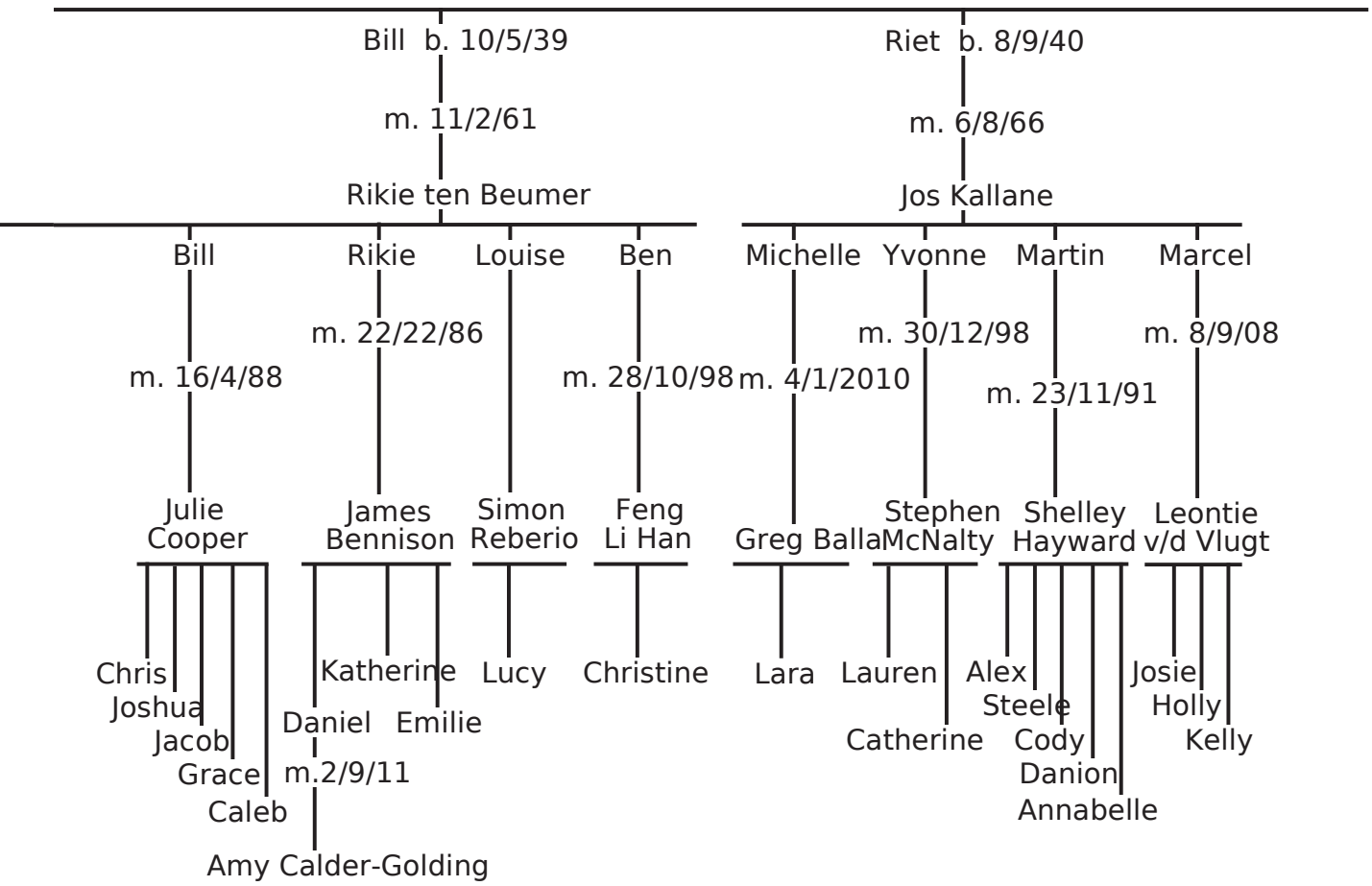
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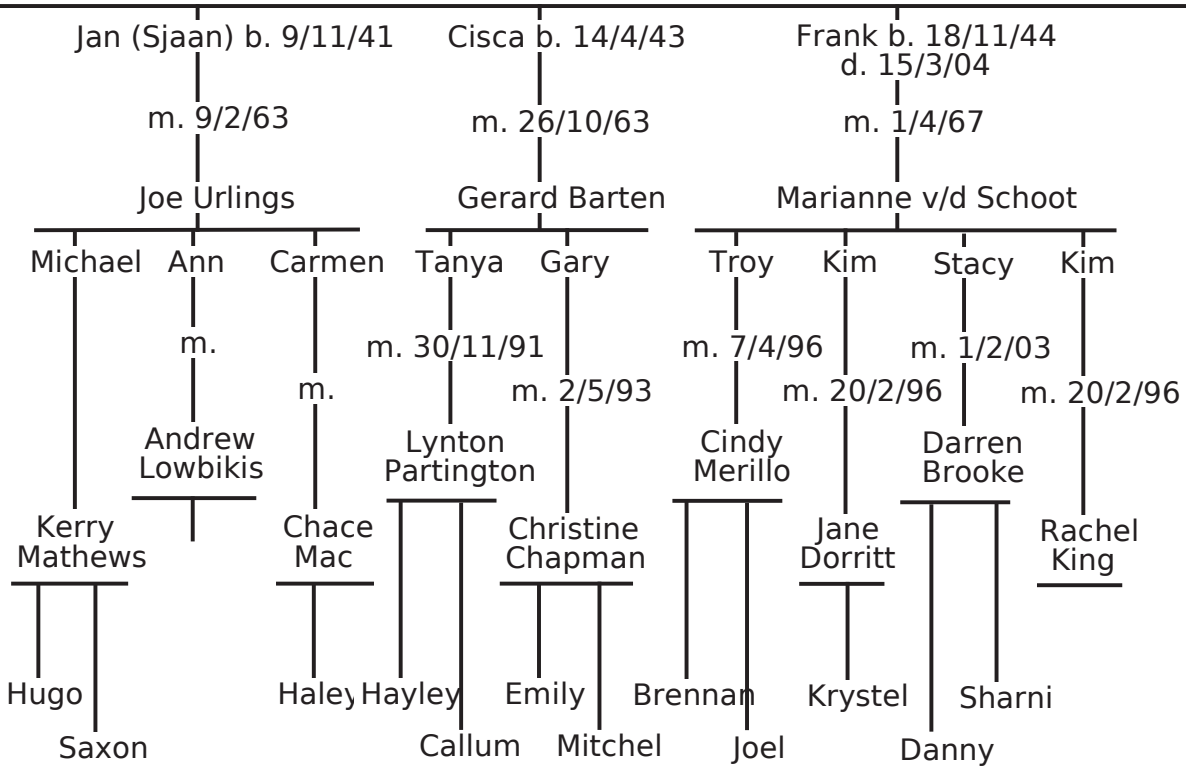
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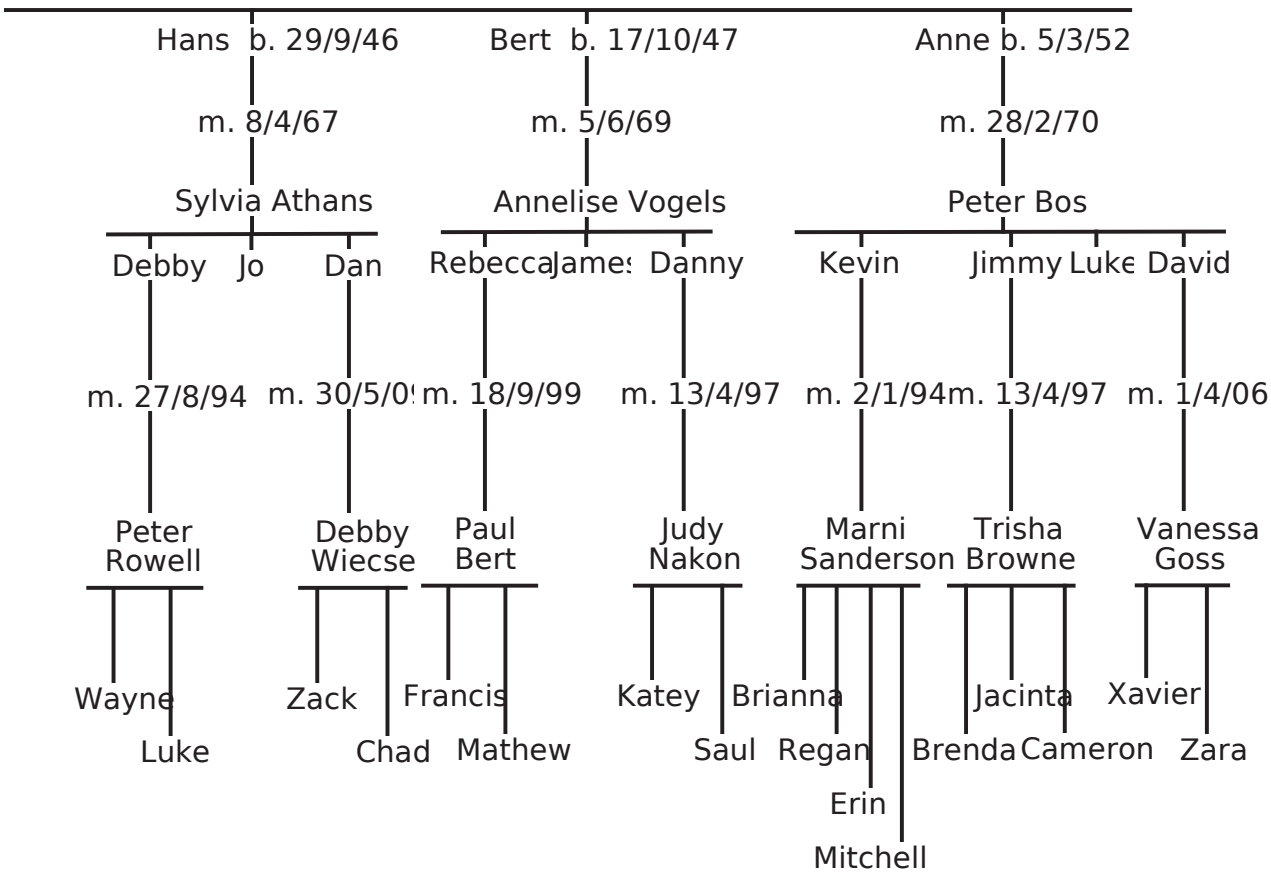
T FAMILY TREE



THE OORSCHOT



FAMILY TREE


Hans b. 29/9/46
Bert b. 17/10/47
Anne b. 5/3/52
m. 8/4/67
m. 5/6/69
m. 28/2/70
Sylvia Athans
Annelise Vogels
Peter Bos
Debby
Jo
Dan
Rebecca
James
Danny
Kevin
Jimmy
Luke
David
m. 27/8/94
m. 30/5/0
m. 18/9/99
m. 13/4/97
m. 2/1/94
m. 13/4/97
m. 1/4/06
Peter Rowell
Debby Wiecse
Paul Bert
Judy Nakon
Marni Sanderson
Trisha Browne
Vanessa Goss
Wayne
Luke
Zack
Chad
Francis
Mathew
Katey
Saul
Brianna
Regan
Erin
Mitchell
Jacinta
Brenda
Cameron
Xavier
Zara

CHAPTER 1

ROTTERDAM

•

The largest harbour of the world around 1930 was enjoying a beehive of activity because of its location close to the North Sea. It is located on the rivers the WAAL and the MAAS. Their waters flow from the river RHINE, which starts its origin in Switzerland and flows through Germany and through a large industrial and mining area called the RUHR District, which produces an enormous amount of goods like coal, liquid fuel, all sorts of metal products, ore, chemical products, fertilizers, sands and gravels, just to name a few. All this has to be transported to all parts of the world and the most economical way is of course by using the large network of water ways that is available in Europe and in particular via the RHINE and the Dutch rivers through Rotterdam.

Now, as the larger ships, that transport these goods all over the world, cannot reach the various German locations, all these products are being transported on smaller ships called barges. There are two types of barges. One is completely self propelled, meaning that they have their own inboard engine driving the propeller.

When fully loaded, the sides are just about 30 cm above water. The other type is a sort of tugboat with a square bow at the front. Then they would have tied against this square bow a separate flat bottomed freight-boat with no engine, but square ends on either end. It is attached to the tugboat by means of steel cables, which are wound tight so that the tugboat and flat bottomed barge becomes one unit.

Often they would couple a number of barges end to end to increase the load that they are transporting. The advantage of this method is also, that when they have reached their destination, they can than uncouple the flat bottom barges and leave them behind to be emptied, while the tugboat picks up another set of empty flat bottom barges for the return journey. This way

there is no waiting time lost during the unloading process, and the tugboat with its manpower is continually working.

This flow of all sorts of barges from many locations along the RHINE and the Dutch rivers is an impressive sight. Hundreds of them and it never seems to stop! One could stand along the river, as I once did near Gorkum, which is about half way between Rotterdam and Nijmegen, near the German border.

In the many harbours of Rotterdam, you will find any amount of large ocean going ships that will take on the loads from the barges coming in to Rotterdam. You can imagine the amount of equipment required along the many harbours, which you will find from east of Rotterdam to right up to Hook of Holland, which is at the very point where the main stream of rivers, flowing through Rotterdam, find their way to the North Sea. The amount of equipment at all these many harbours in the form of cranes and grabs and any other type of goods handling machinery to cope with the large quantities of goods and products being transferred from the barges to the large ocean going ships with destinations all over the world, is mind bogging!

On the other hand, many goods of all sorts are being brought in from all over the world to Rotterdam to be transferred onto barges to find its way to the various locations around Europe. It is because of this hectic activity in Rotterdam and surrounding areas that Rotterdam is often referred to as a THROUGH HARBOUR.

It is in this city of Rotterdam that my life story begins.

My grandfather, on my father’s side, lived in a village called Rijswijk, just north of Rotterdam and he was what the Dutch called a koster, and that is caretaker of the church. My grandparents were Catholic, and he was employed to take care of all matters relating to all the church activities. It was his job to see to it that the church was cleaned, that the vestments were washed and ironed and prepared for mass, and the flowers were fresh on the altar before the service. He was also responsible for the security of the church building by opening and closing the church at the appropriate times. During the Sunday High Mass, he would stand at the back of the church, all dressed up as a Swiss Guard, with a lance in his hand, keeping an eye out for anything that might interrupt the service or for anybody that needed assistance in any way. He was a well respected man in his community and his name was HENDRIK PETRUS OORSCHOT.

His wife, my grandmother, whose name was before her marriage, Bertha Wilhelmina van Kruisbergen, was a solid lady and was called by us kids, big oma (grote oma), because our other oma was a much smaller lady. They had five children. My father Theo (Theodorus Johannus Jozef) was the oldest followed by Henk, Willem and then the only girl called Mien and then the



Uncle Willem in front of the Maasbode office.

youngest boy called John. This was a good size family that had to exist on my grandfather's income as a caretaker of the church, which was not elaborate. Therefore my grandfather was allowed to use the church grounds as a garden and besides growing flowers for the church services, he could also grow his own vegetables for his family.

And then disaster struck! At the age of 37, my grandfather died suddenly, leaving my grandmother with a young family of five kids and a small income earned by my father, who then at the age of 17, was already working. They were living in a small house next to and owned by the church. They were allowed to stay there for the time being without paying rent, as they were not paying rent before, when my grandfather was attached to the church as caretaker. The close family from my grandfather's side helped out financially and my grandmother took on cleaning work at the office where her brother, Uncle Willem van Kruisbergen was in charge of distribution at the MAASBODE. All in all it was a hard time for my grandmother with 4 kids still going to school.

My father worked already with his Uncle Willem at the MAASBODE, which was a catholic newspaper that came out in the morning as well as in the evening. The MAASBODE was produced and printed in Rotterdam and provided a lot of work for many people. He was involved with the distribution of the paper twice a day all over Holland which amounted to the transportation of packs of newspaper to the various parts of Holland. There were more Catholic people living in the middle and the southern part of Holland than in the northern part so a lot more newspapers had to be transported to these areas where more Catholic people were living. The longer distances were



Grandfather Copier & Grandmother Copier with my Mum as a baby.



My Mum and Dad in 1931

covered by train and as every train had a goods carriage at the end of it to carry all sorts of items, the newspapers were also in that carriage. At various cities like Maastricht, Eindhoven, Tilburg, Breda, Utrecht, Arnhem, Amsterdam and so on, the packs of papers were then transferred to the local buses, which delivered them to the various villages around them. All this took a lot of attention and organizing and that was were my father worked under the helm of his Uncle Willem.

As time went on, my father's brother Henk also found employment with the MAASBODE, doing similar work as my father did and the next brother Willem, finished up going to a Catholic seminary in Belgium, called the Sacred Heart Missionary where he studied for the priesthood. My father's sister Mien got married very young to a greengrocer who lived and worked in a place called Gorkum, east of Rotterdam along the river Waal and the youngest brother John, eventually also finished up working at the MAASBODE.

There were many small canals and waterways through all of Rotterdam with arched bridges over them to allow small barges to move along underneath and to carry all sorts of goods from one location to another within or near Rotterdam.

One of these canals was called the Rotte. A main street that crossed the Rotte over one of those arched bridges was called the Paradijs laan, which was a fairly wide street, because it had tram lines going through it. I can still

see this street in my mind with the many trees lining either side and the wide concrete paving between the curbing and the front of the houses. There were no front gardens at all in the street and the houses were all built together in one large block, with concrete steps leading up to each front door, set back from the front façade. On either side of the front steps there were small low windows, just above the paving level, allowing natural light into the cellars, which were located underneath the main floor.

At number 111 in the Paradijs laan, my other grandfather, Johannus Carolus COPIER, married to my grandmother, Cornelia Elisabeth Verhesen, were living with their family of nine children. Upon opening the front door, you entered a corridor with doors on either side of it and one door at the end of it.

The first door on the left opened into a workshop. You see, John Copier, my grandfather, was a shoemaker/cobbler working from home. On the outside wall, left from the front door, there was a plaque fixed above the low cellar window and below the main floor window of the workshop. It read: “Jan Copier Schoenmaker“. Inside his workshop he had a small counter near the door and in the middle of the room there was a workbench with a shoemakers model on it, called a “last “, on which a shoe would slide in order to work on it, for instance, gluing and pinning soles and heels to the underside of a shoe, etc.

On the bench you would find all sorts of tools to cut leather with and various types of hammers to be used for nailing pins into the soles. There were also a number of small dishes containing all sorts of pins and small nails. Along the wall there was a cast iron stand with a grinding wheel on it which had on one side a stiff round wire brush for roughening the back of a sole, to create a better grip, before gluing it to a shoe, while on the other side of the grinding wheel was a round stiff rag for polishing the leather once the shoe was repaired. Further along the wall there were some shelves, containing any amount of pieces of leather of various colours, required for the repair of all types of shoes. In the corner of the room there was a narrow staircase leading down to the cellar below the workshop, which was used for storage of anything from household goods to leather materials.

At the right hand side of the corridor there were two doors leading to two bedrooms and at the end of the corridor, a door opened up to a large room that was used as a meals area and a kitchen. In the corner of this room there was a staircase giving access to an attic, which provided much needed sleeping accommodation for this large family. Behind the meals and kitchen area there was an external door opening out to a small landing and a staircase going down to a backyard, just big enough to accommodate a set of clothes lines, and allowing access to a type of laundry and a wash house under the main

floor, where the whole family used to wash themselves. The whole street of houses would have been at least a couple of hundred years old.

The oldest girl in this family was Adriana Theodora, my mother, known as Sjaan and she worked part time in a general store just around the corner. She also learned dressmaking that she did at home on the sewing machine belonging to her mother.

You can imagine that in a large family such as this, there was always plenty of sewing work to be done in the way of new clothing and repairs. This knowledge of sewing served her very well in her later life when she had her own family. Her brothers and sisters names were, Piet, Karel, Ans, Riek, Kees, Willem, Coby and Leo. An additional two died at one years of age. Some of the surviving children will come back in to my story at a later date. When Sjaan was working in the store one day, she met a young fellow who called in to buy tobacco and cigarette papers. His name was Theo Oorschot and he worked for the Maasbode in Rotterdam and drove a small van, doing deliveries of parcels of newspapers to various parts of Rotterdam and surrounding villages. As time progressed, he went out of his way to call into this store, to get just anything in order to meet up with her again. Eventually he asked her out to the pictures on the following Saturday evening. It did not take long for Theo to be invited for dinner at Sjaan's place in the Paradijs laan and to meet the Copier family, which was a total of five boys and four girls. In return Sjaan was invited to Theo's place to meet his side of the family. His father had died some 3 years earlier, so Theo's mother had the task of providing for her family of five children all by her self. By then, two of her children worked; the third son, Willem was studying at a Catholic seminar in Belgium, while Mien and John were still at school. It was not an easy time for my grandmother, but she never complained and she just plodded on. Being a stout Catholic woman, she was very proud of the fact that her third son was studying for the priesthood and that alone gave her further strength to carry on. When she met Sjaan, she took an instant liking to her as she could see that they would grow into a good couple for each other.

The times were not easy with an economic depression taking hold of every country around the world. As a result of that, many people lost their jobs and food was becoming harder to afford. Young couples, who wanted to start off in life getting married, were finding it increasingly difficult to get accommodation. You had to get on the waiting list to obtain Council housing, and the waiting list was pretty long. In most cases a few years was normal. If you wanted to get married, some couples moved in to attics above one of their parent's places but that did not provide too much privacy and that often led to frictions between the young people and the parents. So Theo and Sjaan were

anxious to settle down with little prospect for accommodation, as there was just no available space at both of their parents homes.

Then in January 1931, Theo, my Dad, got a message to attend a meeting at the head office of the Maasbode. The General Manager and uncle Willem discussed with my Dad his progress over the last three years in the job and expressed their satisfaction on how he approached his work and the commitment that he had put into it. Because the person that was looking after the office in Leiden, was being transferred to another location, that position became available for someone else. The job would involve a number of activities:

Taking delivery at early morning and late afternoon of the many packs of newspapers. Counting out the seven stacks of papers for each of the delivery men, who would deliver their rounds by pushbike throughout Leiden.

With the van that went with the job, delivering packs of newspapers to the surrounding villages, mornings and afternoons, and liaise with the persons looking after the village's deliveries. Collecting the subscription moneys for the papers and submitting them to head office.

There was a house provided with the job with rear access for the deliveries. They asked him if he thought if he could handle that, and my Dad said that he would have no problem with it. Then they said that there was one requirement and that was that the position was open for a married man.

That was when my Dad got very excited, because this Leiden job, with the accommodation provided, gave him the opportunity to get married. Sjaan was very happy about this prospect of Leiden, so when he told management that he would get married as soon as possible, he was given the job of looking after Leiden. Both families on either side were very pleased for them and they set the wedding date for the sixth of May 1931. It was the first wedding in both families.

As both families were Catholic, the wedding took place in the local church on the Saturday with the reception for friends and family in the café at the end of the Paradijs laan. All in all it was a happy event made even happier due to the accommodation situation that was made available in those difficult times.

Dad got stuck into his new job in Leiden with a lot of enthusiasm and diligence and soon settled into a routine of early hours of work and because of that, early evenings to bed, a situation that the young married couple had no problem with!

Leiden was, and still is, a historical town located about 15 km. north east off The Hague and about 30 km. directly north of Rotterdam in the province of South Holland. It has many classical buildings including one of the oldest universities of Europe. Because of this, nowadays, it attracts a lot of tourists and sightseers which does improve the economy in this part of Holland.

However, back in 1931, the tourist industry was almost none. My Dad was fortunate to have a permanent job at the start of his married life and enjoyed the fact of being fully occupied all day.

It was about in August that year that my mother realized that she was pregnant and that made them both very happy. That joy was soon shared with both families and my Mum started to do the things that expectant Mums do leading up to the important date in April the following year. It was on the 29th of April 1932 that I was born at home in Leiden. It was common practice that babies were born at home with the assistance of a midwife and as there were no complications expected, that was how things went. I was named after my father's father, my grandfather, being Hendrik Petrus Oorschot. To me, now at 78, that seems like a long time ago.

About four months later, Mum found out, that she was expecting again. The old tale that while a mother was feeding her child, that she could not fall pregnant, proved to be a farce. Not that they did not welcome this fact that their little family was going to expand, it meant further expenses in a time that was very difficult in their early married life.

Then on one of Dad's calls into head office in Rotterdam he was called into the manager's office for a chat. Sitting around the board meeting table having a cup of coffee, the manager expressed how pleased they were with the way my Dad approached his work. That was of course a real feather in his cap, but then he found out what this was leading up to. They asked him, if he could be interested in being transferred to take charge of the office in Eindhoven, south in the province of Brabant .They would provide accommodation, larger than he had in Leiden, free transport costs for the move to Eindhoven, and most importantly, an increase in his monthly salary.

Dad was delighted with this prospect, particularly with the knowledge that his little family was growing in size. He said that he would discuss this move with his wife, because the negative side of this was, that they would be a lot further away from their families in Rotterdam. Within a couple of days, Dad notified them at head office that they would accept their offer and a month later they moved to Eindhoven.

CHAPTER 2

EINDHOVEN.

•

Eindhoven is located in the southern part of the province of Brabant about 20 km. from the Belgium border. It is known world wide, as the location where Philips started its business in the electrical field, commencing with the manufacture of the light bulb. Their first factory was built in the Emma Singel, located from the Keizers Gracht to the Station Plein in a curved shape. The Station Plein is the square on front of the railway station. The last time that I was in Eindhoven, (back in 1982), their first building in the Emma Singel, had a large white sign with black letters fixed high up on the front of the building. It read “1 8 9 2 “, indicating the start of their business activities. I don’t know if that building still exists these days, but in my mind I can still see it there. Since then, Philips has grown into the largest business in Eindhoven, employing many thousands of people and diversifying into many fields of the electrical industry. As time went on they made radios, electrical household goods, televisions, and many more electrical and electronic items. They established factories and business places all around the world and is nowadays recognized as a large world wide organization.

Sports became an important part of business and Philips created their own sports activities. As the soccer game was already very popular, not only in Holland, but right throughout Europe, Philips had their own club called P.S.V., standing for: Philips Sports Vereniging. They were playing at the top level against other clubs of the same class like, E.V.V. being Eindhoven Voetbal Vereniging, Ajax of Amsterdam, Feyenoord of Rotterdam and many more. They of course had their own sports facilities in a grand way and the games were always played on a Sunday afternoon. It was a Sunday custom to go to the café (pub) for a few beers or even spirits, before going to the soccer game.

Eindhoven was mostly Catholic and our parish church was the Saint Catharina church in the Kerk Straat. It had two church towers, side by side,



Do you see the Lord's Statue at the top that was shot at by the German soldiers during the occupation at war time?

over the main entrance of the church and the church was built in the classical Gothic style. Very impressive I might say! The church was built in the shape of a crucifix, like most of them were, with the main altar just beyond the centre of the cross and a couple of side altars in the sides of the cross.

The centre of the church was quite high with columns on either side, while the outside walls were lower with flying buttresses resting on the centre columns and the outside walls. There were fixed pews in the middle section, with an elaborate raised pulpit on the left between the front pew and the main altar.

The pulpit had a sound shield hanging over it to help spread the sound into the church. Between the columns and the outside walls there were many loose seats that could be stored away when not needed, during the week. But at Sunday High Mass, they were all used as the church would be full. From the age of about 12 until I was about 18, I used to be an altar boy, assisting the father at mass during the week as well as on Sunday. I was also on the church choir singing at the Sunday High Mass at 10:30 in the morning. This Mass was always packed, and I still don't know, if it was because of my singing or the way the organ was played! I think it was the organ music that did it, because besides the massive pipe organ at the back of the church, they also had a set of organ pipes in the right hand side of the cross, just about four metres above the floor and these were also controlled by the organist at the back of the church.

Now the organist was an amazing man as he was blind and he was able to put a lot of feeling in his playing. When the service was finished, nobody left the church because everybody knew what was to follow, and the organist did not disappoint them in his performance, using the front and the back organ pipes in harmony with each other. In my mind, I can still see him sitting there on his organ seat, with a great smile on his face, really enjoying himself.

Eindhoven has a lot of churches, but there is one church in particular that I remember and that is the "Paters kerk" (Church of the Fathers), so called because it was joined to a monastery of monks. The interesting thing was that it had a large statue of the Lord in bronze with his arms all stretched out, mounted on top of the single church tower. It was a very impressive sight, especially when the sun was shining upon it.

This church would be about 500 metres from the Saint Catharina church. About halfway between the two churches there was a large two-storey free-standing mansion that during the German occupation of Holland, was used by the Germans as a headquarters building. At times the German soldiers would use the statue on top of the "Paters Kerk" as target practice which was very upsetting for the people living nearby, but there was nothing that they could do about it!

Overleaf you will see a map of the area of Eindhoven where you will find our address being “Kleine Berg 76”. In Dutch the name of the street comes first followed by the street number. Number 76 was where the “Kleine Berg” joins the “Grote Berg” in a V formation. The house number is marked on the map as such. Often when someone runs a business from home, they would be living upstairs and they enter their living quarters through the business area. As our family lived there for some nineteen years, I would like to take the liberty of describing the neighbourhood and the house in detail to you.

On the left side of the house where we were living, was a liquor shop, which was a single storey and the owners lived behind their shop. Next to that was a bakery. This bakery was on a corner of Willem de Zwijgerstraat and our street and was again a double storey. The baker’s family also lived above their shop. On the right side of our house was a book shop, called “Hugo Jonkers” and next to that was a pharmacy and the owners name was “Lachniet”. Again both the owners lived above their business.

Our house, number 76, was also a double storey and like most of them in the street about eight metres wide. The façade had the single front door in the middle with a highlight over and a separate large window on either side of the door, about 90 cm above floor level. On the left hand side of the front door was a large brass round knob attached to a square bar that was sleeved through the wall to a large bell inside the passage.

When you pulled the brass knob outside, the bell inside would “clang” to let the people inside know that there was someone at the front door. Because of its noise, kids walking past would often pull the bell and then run away. Through the front door there was a passage with a ceramic tiled floor and on each side a door leading into the two front rooms.

The left room was furbished as an office with a large desk and cabinets along the wall. Behind the large front window was a large timber panel slanted inwards just a little so that sheets of newspaper could be fixed on the window side of the panel in order that people standing outside in front of the window could read the paper exposed. The right hand door of the passage took you into the small lounge. This door was not really used and was always kept locked, in order to maintain privacy for the family.

An opaque glass door at the end of this short passage opened up to the rest of the house, with again a short passage going straight into the kitchen which was about five metres wide and four metres deep. On the back wall was a cupboard with a grey granite top with a basin and a brass water tap over it. On the left of the cupboard was a gas cooking top. The left wall of the kitchen contained a large solid cast iron stove for burning wood and coal. Just inside the kitchen on the left was a sort of old fashioned kitchen cupboard with glass

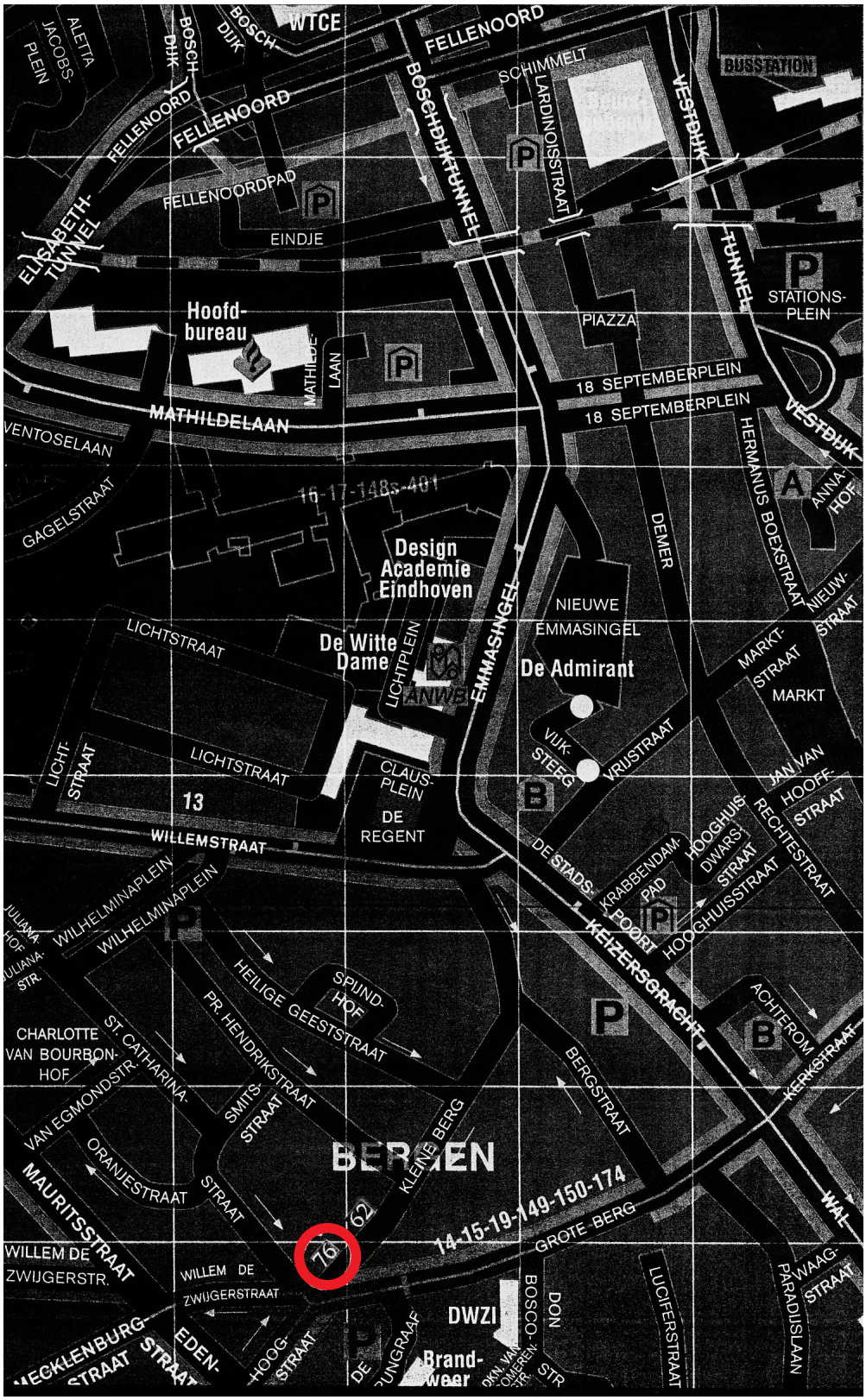
doors. In the corner, between the stove and the kitchen cupboard there was a door leading to the cellar underneath the kitchen via a winding concrete staircase. You could not stand up straight in the cellar because it was about one and a half metres high. The cellar would be about four metres deep and about two metres wide. Because of the concrete ceiling over it, the cellar was very cool and therefore ideal for storing all sorts of food wares and conserves on the shelves that were there. The top part of the stairs also had a lot of shelves that served as a sort of pantry. I remember the potatoes that were stored in the cellar, because of the damp situation, they were growing a lot of roots on them!

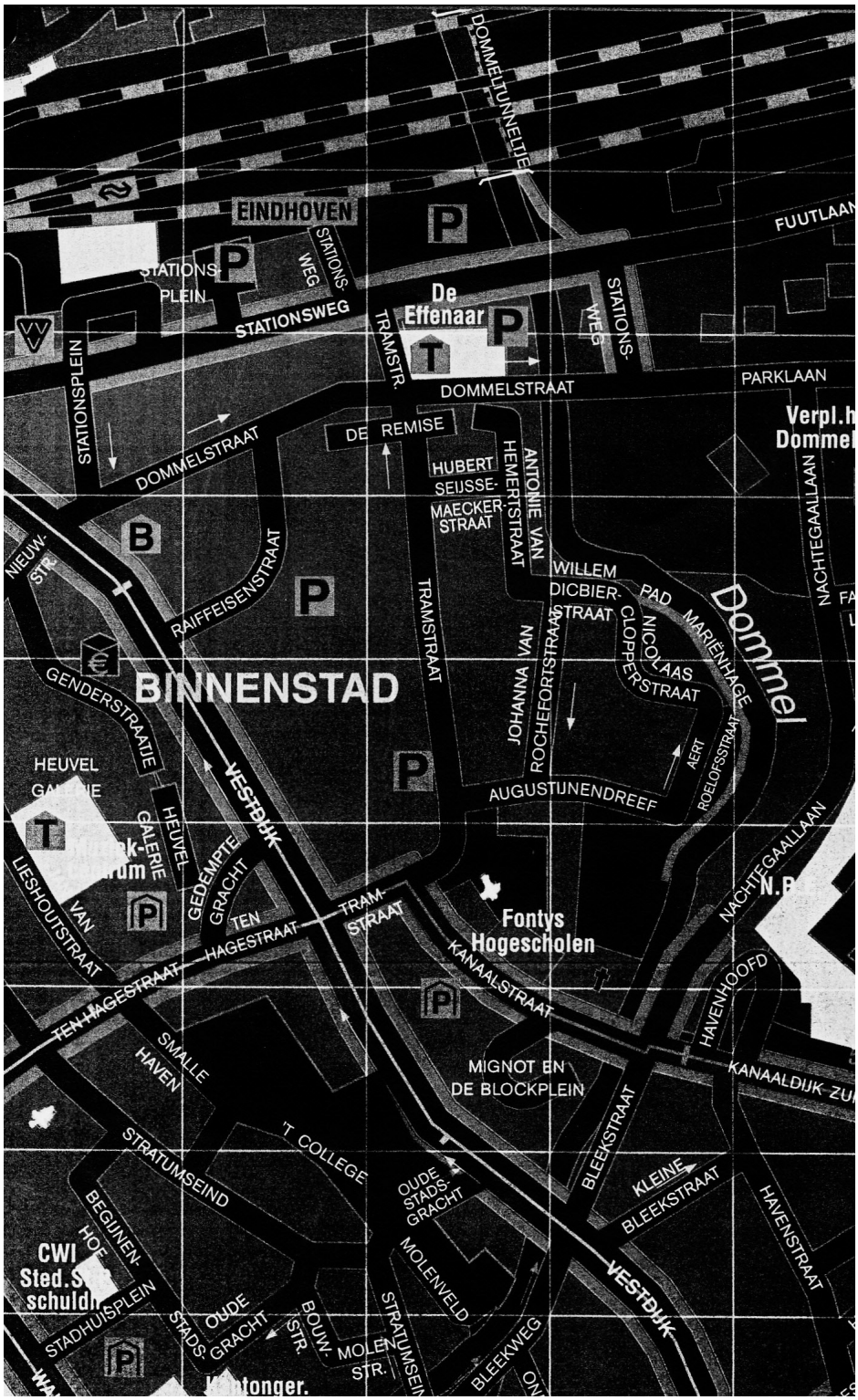
Going back to the short passage before the kitchen, on the left there was a wooden staircase leading to the first floor. Opposite the staircase through a doorway, was the dining area which had in the far corner a solid fuel heater for burning coal to heat this part of the house. There were a set of glass sliding doors between the dining room and the adjoining front lounge room. Returning to the kitchen, on the right hand side of the wash basin, there was a door leading to a short passage with the wash house on the left being used as a laundry. I can still see the old fashioned washing machine with a tub, which looked like the bottom half of a wine barrel, and a wooden lid on it that had a pair of cogwheels with a chain around it connected to a small electric motor.

On top of the back was a clothes wringer mounted that had a handle fitted to the side that would operate the rollers. At today's standard you could call it a piece of antique equipment, but at that time it did a lot of family washing. The rest of this laundry was used for storing all sorts of items. At the end of the short passage next to the laundry, was the only toilet in the house with a concrete water closet high up on the wall with a chain attached to pull, in order to flush the toilet. On the inside of the toilet door was a bundle of newspapers cut to the same size with a string punched through one corner to do the obvious job required after. Because of my Dads job there was never a shortage of paper!

Climbing the stairs now to the first floor were the bedrooms. From the top of the stairs there was an "L" shaped passage. There were four rooms, two at the front and two at the back. Mum and Dad's room was directly above the downstairs front office with a window straight above the office window and an alcove on the internal wall used for clothes etc.

The bed was against the right hand wall and there was always a baby cot against the left hand wall. The second front bedroom was above the lounge room down stairs and was eventually allocated to all the boys (except me). The bedroom at the back, above the downstairs dining room, was eventually the girls bedroom and along side the passage there was a small room, my bedroom, about three metres by about two metres and was above the kitchen


WTCE
FELLENOORD
BOSCH DIJK
ALETTA JACOBS-PLEIN
BOSCHDIJKTUNNEL
SCHIMMELT
LARDINOISSTRAAT
VESTDIJK
BUSSTATION
FELLENOORDPAD
EINDJE
ELISABETH-TUNNEL
TUNNEL
STATIONS-PLEIN
Hoofd-bureau
MATHILDE-LAAN
PIAZZA
18 SEPTEMBERPLEIN
MATHILDELAAN
VENTOSELAAN
GAGELSTRAAT
HERMANUS BOEXSTRAAT
ANNA-HOF
NIEUW-STRAAT
Design Academie Eindhoven
DEMER
NIEUWE EMMASINGEL
EMMASINGEL
LICHTSTRAAT
De Witte Dame
LICHTPLEIN
ANWB
De Admirant
MARKT-STRAAT
MARKT
VIJK-STEEG
VRIJSTRAAT
JAN VAN HOOFF-STRAAT
LICHT-STRAAT
13
CLAUS-PLEIN
DE REGENT
WILLEMSTRAAT
HOOGHUIS-DWARS-STRAAT
RECHTESTRAAT
DE STADS-KRABBENDAM-PAD
HOOGHUISSTRAAT
POORT
KEIZERSGRACHT
WILHELMINAPLEIN
JULIANA-HOF
JULIANA-STR.
HEILIGE GEESTSTRAAT
SPUND-HOF
PR. HENDRIKSTRAAT
ACHTEROM
KERKSTRAAT
CHARLOTTE VAN BOURBON-HOF
ST. CATHARINA-STR.
VAN EGMONDSTR.
SMITS-STRAAT
BERGSTRAAT
BERGEN
KLEINE BERG
ORANJESTRAAT
STRAAT
MAURITSSTRAAT
14-15-19-149-150-174
GROTE BERG
WAL
WILLEM DE ZWIJGERSTR.
WILLEM DE ZWIJGERSTRAAT
DWZI
Brand-weer
BOSCO-DON
LUCIFERSTRAAT
WAAG-STRAAT
PARADIJSLAAN
MECKLENBURG-STRAAT
EDEN-STRAAT
HOOG-STRAAT
DE JUNGRAAF
DKN. VAN OMMEREN-STR.



This is part of the map of Eindhove where we used to live at number 76 Kleine berg.

downstairs. Looking through the window, I could see the back yard, as the laundry behind the kitchen was only a single storey.

From the passage, there was a wooden stair case leading to the attic over all the bedrooms. Standing about half way up the stair case, there was a wooden lid closing off the attic and you would have to push it up. As it was hinged on the right hand side, it would than rest against the roof structure behind it. The attic had a window on the side, looking over the roof of the single storey liquor shop next door and a skylight window at the front. There was a little alcove from the passage under the attic staircase and the protective hand railing of the stair case going down. This little alcove played an important part in our family.

As you now know there was only one toilet in the house and that was downstairs next to the laundry and particularly in the winter months, it was bitterly cold. So in this alcove there was, what was called a “pis emmer “, piss bucket, which was used often during the night by the various members of the family. Of course this contraption needed to be emptied in the morning and my Dad saw fit to delegate this job to my oldest two sisters when they were old enough to do this. Needless to say that some accidents happened whereby bucket and girl did not quite make the top part of the winding stairs and girl and bucket came down the stairs causing a smelly mess!

From the small passage near the toilet downstairs, there was an external door leading to an inner court, surrounded by the toilet wall, the back of the dining room and the blank wall of the bookshop of Hugo Jonkers next door. From the inner court there was a path in the middle through the garden area with a chicken run on the right hand side and some garden and paved area on the left. At the end of this path to the left, there was a double solid timber gate about 2 metres high, leading in to a parking area belonging to the greengrocer in the St Catharina Straat, just around the corner of the baker that I mentioned before.

Going back again to the end of this path, you would be looking at a solid brick wall about three meters high and on front of this wall, my Dad was growing the best and largest rhubarb plants that I have ever seen and I will explain why. Just outside our toilet there was a concrete pit below the paving with a lid over it. The solids from the toilet got trapped in this pit, while the fluids drained away into a pit further into the garden. My Dad used to shovel these solids into a bucket and than spread them out over the rhubarb plants.

Our garden was further extended to the right behind the small backyards of our neighbours, starting at Hugo Jonkers at number 74 until number 62. This amounted to a piece of land about seventy metres long by about twenty five metres deep. In this we had about nine pear trees. Some were cooking

pears but most of them were eating pears. These pears were picked green and taken to the attic above the house, in order to ripen. There they were laid out on the floor and covered with plenty of newspaper, so that they could ripen in the dark. A lot of them would eventually rot as there were just too many of them.

Between two pear trees a washing line was fixed with multiple lines for my mother and later on also for the girls to hang up the washing. Near the end of the path there was on the right hand side a glass house which was also used for drying washing. This extended backyard was often used by my Dad for growing vegetables, such as beans, onions, tomatoes, lettuce and many others. I guess, having seen his Dad growing vegetables in the church yard when he was young, would have motivated him to do the same with the land available. Later on during the winter months, part of this land was used by the green grocer around the corner to store large quantities of potatoes in a hole dug in the ground and covered with straw and soil to insulate them against the frost.

It was needless to say that this was also a welcome supply of potatoes for our growing family. Behind our extended garden area, separated by a high brick wall was an orchard with many types of trees and on the right hand side of this orchard, there was a double storey brick building. This building was used for the manufacture of the famous “Willem II “cigars. It had a lot of small windows overlooking the orchard upstairs as well as downstairs, and when the building in later years became vacant, these windows became target practice for us growing boys, with so many pears as ammunition available to us in abundance. We often got into trouble for this!

Now that I have given you an insight of where we lived in Eindhoven, I will continue with my story.

When my Mum and Dad moved to Eindhoven in October 1932, they were expecting their second child. The house they moved into at the Kleine Berg 76 needed a lot of attention as the previous person living there was a single occupant and did not look after the house that well. So Mum had a lot of cleaning ahead of her whilst looking after a newborn and also preparing for the arrival of the second baby.

As the work for my Dad with the Maasbode here in Eindhoven was a lot more elaborate than it was in Leiden, he was flat out settling in with the added responsibilities. As in Leiden, he had a van for deliveries of parcels of newspapers to some surrounding villages for both the morning and evening addition of the Maasbode.

The papers arrived in Eindhoven by train at the railway station and he could use a loading bench in the parcel section to prepare the stacks of papers for the delivery men, who would then deliver them by push bike to the various

clients in the suburbs where they themselves lived. They would carry large canvas bags across their carriers over their back wheels and some even their front wheels as required, and they would do this in the early morning and late afternoon.

As the times were hard in the early and mid thirties, there was never any shortage of willing workers to earn some extra money. But this work force needed to be managed and organized which in turn created a lot of work for my Dad. As Dad found out, the previous person that was running Eindhoven, neglected some of his work, which needed to be corrected and now Dad realized why he was selected to come down south, after he had proven himself in Leiden.

Mum and Dad settled in well and in February 1933, things were being prepared for the baby's arrival. I remember some years later, that when Mum and Dads bed was taken down and set up in the lounge, that there was a baby on the way. Of course, I cannot remember, if they did this bed movement back in 1933, but I do know that later on it was always done, because it would have been a lot harder for my Mum to climb the fairly steep staircase with the twist at the top whilst heavily pregnant.

My brother John was born on the 19th March, forty one days before I turned one. Later on in life we would often say on John's birthday, that now we are twins until my birthday was there at the end of April. As it was the custom in those days, John was named after my mother's father, whose name was Johannes Carolus COPIER. So John was baptized Johannes Wilhelmus Josephus.

In Holland his name was shortened to Jan but once arriving in Australia, he was more commonly called John. From here on things became more of a routine with Dad attending to the Maasbode activities and Mum now looking after two babies including nappy washing and cot cleaning. I remember Mum telling me that John and I were not the cleanest babies on earth. But like any good mother, and by God she was a good mother, she sure coped with us well as was found out some six months later when it was confirmed that she was pregnant again.

On the 8th of August 1934, my sister Bep was born in the lounge downstairs after the usual bed shifting from upstairs. Bep was named after my grandmother, Dad's mother, whose name was Bertha Wilhelmina, so Bep's full name at birth was Bertha Wilhelmina Maria.

My Dad was working some long hours at times and he was often driving in the dark in the early hours of the morning. It was on one of these trips to Limburg that he was involved in a car accident. Luckily he was not badly hurt, but somehow, as a result of shock, a few months after the accident, he started

to lose his hair all over his body. Of course I can't remember this, but I was told about this later on.

My Dad was very embarrassed about the bald head, particularly as he was always with so many people through his work, that he ended up wearing a boll hat to hide his shiner. Now almost opposite our house there was a barber shop and the owners name was van der Linden.

His suggestion, to stimulate the growth of hair on his head, was to shave his head daily. So every day the barber soaped the top of his head and scraped the soap off with a razor. And behold, after a couple of months, his hair started to grow back.

I have known my Dad having no hair on his legs and I remember only ever seeing a few hairs on his chest. As time went on, there was evidence that my Dad was a very nervous person and this hair situation of his was proof of this.

By the end of August 1935, Mum found out that again she was pregnant, and following that, on the 10th of April 1936, my sister Corrie was born. Following the established custom of naming newborns after grandparents, Corrie was named after my Mum's mother, Cornelia Elisabeth.

Catholic couples usually had large families and it was sometimes expected that one member of the family would follow the calling of becoming a priest or a nun. It was often the pressure put on by the parents or other family members that would persuade a youngster, boy or girl, to be guided in that direction.

Often the parish priest would also get involved in the process of creating a desire to become a priest. This was certainly the case of my Dad's brother Willem. As he was also a good student, he finished up going to a seminary in Belgium, called the Sacred Heart Missionary, to study for the priesthood.

During his study, which took about six years, he developed a desire to become a missionary instead of working in a parish. He was ordained as a priest in 1936, which was a highlight event in our family in those days and for my grandmother it was a proud moment to see her son being ordained a priest.

During his studies he learned the French language fluently and he even lectured in French at the University in Belgium. Also as part of his preparation to go to the Belgium Congo in Africa, he was trained in many medical skills as that was expected to be useful in the remote areas of the Congo. A year later, in 1937, he was sent to the Belgium Congo for a maximum period of five years because any longer than that was considered too much of a health risk.

The Belgium Congo, because of its location near the equator, was known as one of the most unhealthiest places on earth, similar to the Amazon in South America. For a white person to go there was certainly looking for trou-

ble, but as he was following a dream to be a missionary he overlooked the risk and was happy to depart for the mission fields.

In the meantime, life in Eindhoven went its own merry way and my Mum found out by Christmas 1936 that she was pregnant again. On the 15th July 1937 my brother Theo was born and as both grandparents names on either side were used, he was named after his father. He was named Theodorus Adrianus.

September 1937 was an important time for me because that was when I started my primary school in the Don Bosco Street, which is a street coming off the Grote Berg. On the corner of the Grote Berg and the Don Bosco Street was a police station, which will get a mentioning later on in my story, and on the other corner was the Guido Gazellen building, which was used to accommodate young men who had no place to live, a sort of boarding house. What stands in my mind the most, was that the primary school was next door to a cemetery called the Saint Catharina cemetery. Almost opposite the school lived the blind organist that played the organ in the church as I mentioned before. He had a large Labrador dog on a special lead and he also walked with a special coloured cane. I can still see him in my mind walking to church with both his dog and cane. I am amazed of the things that come back into my memory, now that I am writing this book.

By the end of September 1938 my mother was again faced with the knowledge that there was another baby on the way, something she was not really looking forward too. With five young children to care for it was a big task!

She herself grew up as the oldest of nine children and therefore was well used to a big family. However, there was a remarkable difference here because my Dad was away from home a lot because of his work with the Maasbode, while her father in Rotterdam was always home because of his shoemakers business that he was conducting from home and therefore was always around to lend a hand when required.

As time went on in later years I have found that my mother just did not complain about things and got on with the job that she was destined to do in her life. So she just accepted the fact as a gift from God and in the months to follow prepared herself for the arrival of baby number six who was born on the 10th of May 1939, after the usual bed shifting procedure from upstairs to the lounge downstairs. It was a boy again, named Wilhelmus Arnoldus Joseph, named after my Dad’s brother Willem, the missionary who was at that time working in the Belgium Congo.

CHAPTER 3

THE WAR YEARS

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Some of the following information, about what happened during the war years, has been gathered from various history books.

By now it is 1939 and tensions have been building up in Europe between the various nations over the last number of years. Germany from the early 1930s started to build up their armaments. In January 1933 Hitler was appointed German Chancellor. He led a party committed to treaty revision and to a reassertion of German influence. From being a power that worked within the League system, however grudgingly, Germany now set out to repudiate it.

Hitler withdrew the German delegation from the Disarmament Conference and the League of Nations in October 1933. The western powers already knew of German “secret rearmament” before 1933 but had not perceived it as a serious threat. Under Hitler, rearmament assumed a different character. Though the western powers had only a hazy idea of Hitler’s ultimate intentions, it was clear that German rearmament would be directed at some time to a revision of the territorial settlement arranged at Versailles. The Versailles Agreement was struck between the western powers and Germany, after Germany lost the First World War in 1918. This agreement in many ways had sown the seed for the Second World War, because it had stripped Germany of its territorial properties and placed them on a repayment plan for damages caused by Germany as a result of the First World War.

As time went on through the 1920’s and the 1930’s, the western powers became somewhat laxs in following up on these compensation payments while Germany slowly worked on a rearmament course. Hitler was driven by a desire to turn Germany into a super power that would eventually rule the world. In order to achieve this he started to work on a plan of invading adjoining countries and so in 1938 he invaded Czechoslovakia.

He expected that there would be a protest from the western powers and there was a protest, but it did little to stop this invasion. Then in September 1939, thinking that he could continue his planned invasion of Poland, he was surprised that the western powers reacted differently. At 11 a.m. on 3 September Britain declared war on Germany and following that on the same day France declared war on Germany at 5 p.m.

Though neither power entered the war without a sense of profound unease, there was none of the panic and uncertainty of August 1914, or the enthusiasm. The prospect of war had been accepted months before, and repeatedly confirmed in the days leading up to the German invasion. There was consternation in Berlin that the western powers had called Hitler's bluff. But for the western powers the war against Hitler proved to be disastrous.

The strategic calculations which encouraged them to stand firm in September 1939 were exposed as fatally flawed. The rapid defeat of Poland was not unexpected, as both the western powers had always recognized the military impossibility of doing anything in the short term to save Poland. For six months they conducted – the so called "Phony War" – more or less along the lines they had hoped for. Both sides continued to undertake secret negotiations and soundings to see if agreement could be reached. Many Germans expected the Allies to abandon the war once Poland was beyond help and was divided between Germany and Russia according to the terms of the German-Soviet Pact.

In October Hitler announced proposals for peace, but neither side was willing to begin negotiations except on their own terms, a prospect that could not be entertained by either Germany or the Allies. Britain clung to the hope that Germany would still be deterred by the sight of British and French military and economic strength. In October President Roosevelt, of the United States, was informed by Britain that they would win, although not "by a complete and spectacular victory", but by convincing the President that the Germans could not win.

This was to be done, as the Allies had planned, by blockade and economic warfare, and by using their political influence to isolate Germany. Favourable agreements on war trade were reached with Spain, Greece, Holland, Belgium and Scandinavia. The British and French navies immediately began their efforts to place Germany in economic quarantine. Plans were laid to attack Germany at what were supposed to be her economic weak spots, being the supply of iron ore from Sweden and the supply of oil from Romania and the Caucasus. The plans for oil show the general drift of Allied strategic thinking. In January 1940, the French Prime Minister instructed the armed forces to draw up plans for attacking Soviet oil installations and for interrupting Black



This photo was made just after the start of the war in 1940. From left to right: Corry, Theo, Bep, Mum with baby Bill, John with me standing behind John.

Sea shipping which supplied Hitler with vital raw materials. General Gamelin, the Chief French Commander reported that the best method was to bomb the Caucasus and to stir up Muslim revolt against the Soviet government in southern Russia.

In March Gamelin issued a statement to the effect that both oil and Swedish ore must be seized and cut off from Germany, with priority to be given to oil supplies, in order to make the economic stranglehold on Germany tighter. But these were difficult schemes to put into practice, and preparations were interrupted when Germany invaded first Norway (thus protecting her iron ore supplies in Sweden) then France, which ended all thought by the Allies of immediate action against the Soviet Union.

In practice the blockade could not be operated effectively and the Allies started to realize that there was no way that they could prevent or even slow down the massive build up of the German forces. Allied military preparations were confused and poorly co-ordinated. Belgium refused to allow Allied troops to move to the Belgian-German border as had been hoped, so that the Maginot Line became at once more vulnerable than the French had planned because it could be outflanked to the north.

Although there was plenty of intelligence available on German plans to attack and on German strength, the assault when it came was devastating in its speed and competence. The Allies were defeated by the superior fighting skills

and training of the German forces, the one factor that the Allies had failed to take sufficiently into account.

As French defeat became imminent, Britain abandoned full military support in Europe and withdrew what forces she could to the final defense of southern England.

On the 10th of May 1940, Holland, Belgium and Luxemburg were invaded by German troops from across the German border. From the start of the invasion, there was a lot of resistance by the Dutch army. My Dad was called up prior to the invasion to serve in the army as he was trained to do. The Germans landed parachute troops near Rotterdam and because of the unexpected resistance that the Germans faced during the invasion, they bombed the center of Rotterdam on the same day late in the afternoon.

It was reported that the paratroopers that landed near Rotterdam, opened fire on the people that were trying to put out the fires after the bombing. As a result many buildings and houses were flattened including the offices and printing buildings of the Maasbode. My grandmother's (big Oma's) house was also flattened but she survived the onslaught. In England on the next day a new National Government was formed under Winston Churchill and on the 13th day of May, Queen Wilhelmina took all her family to London as it would be too risky to stay in Holland under a German occupation. On the next day Rotterdam was captured by the Germans and Holland ceased fighting and my Dad was sent home to his family in Eindhoven.

As the buildings of the Maasbode were destroyed by the bombardment, the management tried to get the newspaper printed somewhere else, but because the Maasbode was a Catholic newspaper, the German occupation prohibited the printing and distribution of this newspaper. The result of it was that my Dad had no work and no income for his growing family. My dad had gained many contacts over the years working for the Maasbode and through these he soon landed a clerical job at the Eindhoven Council House. At least he now could provide for his family, although it was only just enough to get by on. Amazingly through all these terrible times, my Mum managed to get pregnant again, and my sister Riet was borne on the 8th of September 1940.

She was baptized Maria, Adriana, Theodora and Mum and Dad were very happy that despite all the war worries and the bombing of Rotterdam in May earlier on, this did not have an effect on Mum and she was able to carry the pregnancy to a full term. There were worries that because of all the tensions of these times that she might have another miscarriage like she all ready had between the birth of Theo and Bill back in January 1938, but all ended well and there were now 7 kids in the Oorschot family in Eindhoven. Another thing that was brought about by the Rotterdam bombing was that Oma Oorschot

(big Oma), after losing her house in the bombing, came down to Eindhoven to live with us. My Mum got on very well with Oma and the additional help in running the household with seven kids came in very handy.

I can remember later on that my Mum was spending a lot of time sitting at the dining room table behind her sewing machine making all sorts of kids clothing out of leftover pieces of material that Dad was able to get from the many contacts he had in his business circles.

As time went on food was becoming scarce, so the Germans directed that the various Councils throughout Holland organized for every family to be supplied with food vouchers according to the size of the family and my Dad became involved in the organization and distribution of these vouchers. At the same time, an under cover resistance group was formed and Dad was invited to become part of this. As the Germans became aware of this group and the support it was getting from the Dutch community throughout Holland, it also became very dangerous to be part of this group. There were sympathizers with the German soldiers amongst some Dutch people and they were called NSBers standing for “National Social Beweging”.

They were spying on everybody around you, making it very dangerous to do anything that would upset the German cause. They would report to the Germans anything that looked suspicious and because of that, some people were picked by the German soldiers and deported to Germany to work in their factories making war machinery.

We had one of those NSBers living almost opposite us in the Grote Berg which put a lot of fear into our family because of Dad’s involvement in the underground movement. Dad by nature was a very nervous person as was found out some years earlier, when Dad had his car accident that caused him to lose his hair all over his body. This nervousness did not help him in these trying times being in the underground movement and the fear of being caught out by the spying neighbour across the road, plus the fact that Mum was pregnant again in March 1941 with the 8th child in our family. It was good that my grandmother (Grote Oma) was living with us to give moral support as well as helping out with the many chores around the house.

Additionally, my Uncle Jan, my Dad’s youngest brother, came over from Rotterdam to live with us, as the situation in Rotterdam had deteriorated with the German occupation of Holland. As Dad knew so many people in Eindhoven, he was able to find work for Uncle Jan making deliveries for the various grocery and domestic shops.

I can still see him on this three wheeler bicycle, which had one wheel at the back directly under the saddle, and two wheels at the front with a metal tray between the two front wheels providing loading space for the goods to be

delivered. On top of the edge of the metal tray that was nearest to the saddle there was a raised handle bar for the full width of the tray, allowing the tray to be swung to the left or right in order to steer the bike. Of course us children were often the cargo over the weekends when Uncle Jan took us for a ride. Since the closing down of the Maasbode, Dad had no vehicle anymore, so he moved around on a pushbike like so many people did at that time.

On 22nd June 1940 France signed an armistice with Germany, which is a cessation from hostilities, in other words a truce, and the German domination of Europe became fact. For Britain this was the worst possible outcome. It exposed the extent of wishful thinking on the Allies' side about the strategy of blockade and containment. French and British power on the Continent was broken, and Britain, not Germany, faced the prospect of diplomatic isolation, even of blockade. The competence of the victory surprised even Hitler, who with his generals had been apprehensive about German chances in the campaign.

As it turned out, German war preparations, though incomplete, had proved equal to a military contest with France. They reached their limit in the failure to defeat Britain from the air, or to launch an invasion of southern England in the autumn of 1940. German forces and equipment had not been built up to face this task with much chance of success in 1940. But it nevertheless appeared that Britain was now weakened, perhaps fatally, as a great power. The German tone in the summer became more dictatorial. Britain was offered the prospect of peace on German terms, which Britain's Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, refused to consider. Plans were laid in Berlin to reconstruct the colonial areas of Africa in Germany's favour. A New Order was declared in Europe. Germany began the task of coordinating the economic resources of the conquered areas into a single German dominated economic bloc.

In the latter part of 1940, Britain's position was further undermined by the onset of economic crises much along the lines predicted in 1939. The American ambassador in London reported that "Britain is busted ". British officials urged on their American colleagues the need for greater help, without which Britain would simply no longer be able to buy raw materials, food and armaments needed to sustain the war. The American attitude to the conflict was from the outset to avoid any political or military involvement, while demonstrating in its economic policy sympathy for the Allied cause. Like President Wilson before him, President Roosevelt dreamt of being able to bring peace in Europe by hosting a great congress of powers.

Until the German attack on France in May 1940, American leaders still thought that it might be possible to reach an agreement with Hitler if the Allies would modify their conditions for negotiations. Even after the defeat of

France the United States refused to enter into any sort of undertaking which might be interpreted as a political commitment. The British were now much keener on American assistance. On May 25th the British chiefs of staff wrote that unless the United States gave "full economic and financial support.....we do not think we could continue the war with any chance of success".

For Roosevelt there were the usual domestic political considerations. Though the Neutrality Act had been modified in November 1939 to allow the Allies to obtain more supplies, new restrictions were imposed in June 1940 in order to safeguard American rearmament, which was finally set in motion in May of that year. 1940 was election year in the United States and Roosevelt was well aware that he could not afford to alienate the isolationist sectors of the electorate by making too many concessions to the British position. When concessions were made they were on the basis of conditions favorable to American interests, the eventuality that the British had feared in 1939.

In August the British were given fifty destroyers in return for eight American naval and air basis on British colonial territory in the western hemisphere from Newfoundland to British Guinea. Increased credit for British purchases in America was granted only on the promise that Britain would liquidate all her remaining foreign assets as far as she could to pay for them, and would also transfer 42 million Pounds Stirling of gold reserves stored in South Africa. When the United States finally agreed to give Britain military equipment under a Lend Lease agreement in February 1941, it was only on the understanding that Britain had finally exhausted all her ability to pay. Britain's continued capacity to prosecute the war now rested on American goodwill.

In the summer of 1940 Hitler ordered the German armed forces to build up a huge army of 180 divisions, with 20 motorized and armoured divisions at its core, for the purpose of turning east against the Soviet Union. So successful had German forces proved to be that Hitler was now convinced that he could have his great war, originally scheduled for the mid-1941, in 1940 and 1941 instead. Defeat of the Soviet Union first also fitted in with the time-scale and nature of German armaments policy. Though large new production plans were laid down for the air force and navy, they would not be ready to fight the Anglo-Saxon powers effectively for at least another two years. Army equipment, on the other hand, was already very large, and was planned to expand further in 1941.

Hitler based his strategy on the assumption that Britain could safely be left in isolation to be defeated later once the Soviet Union had been destroyed. Defeat of the Soviet Union would free him from fear of a war on two fronts, and bring Britain to the negotiating table. It would also free Japan in the east to contain the United States and prevent American aid for Britain.

The Barbarossa campaign meant more than this, however. The Soviet Union was the promised land of the German Lebensraum, living space. Conquest of the Soviet Union also opened up the promise of world power and would give Germany access to vast economic resources which the Anglo-Saxon powers could not match. Defeat of the Soviet Union held out the prospect of a drive towards India and the British interests in the Middle East. Hitler hinted at a final reckoning with the United States.

On the18th December 1940 the German armed forces were issued with instructions for the attack on the Soviet Union, code named Operation Barbarossa. It was to be carried out in the late spring and summer of 1941. As it turned out, the plan's fantastic nature was compromised by events. British success in defeating Italian forces in Africa compelled Hitler to intervene on Italy's behalf by sending a small expeditionary force under General Rommel. In the Balkans Italy had launched an attack on Greece in October 1940 but was facing defeat there as well. In late March an anti-German "coup d'etat" was staged in Yugoslavia, and on 6th of April Hitler ordered an attack on Yugoslavia, followed by a short campaign to defeat the Greek army and rescue his Italian Ally.

As a result of the move to the Balkans the attack on the Soviet Union was postponed from May to late June, which meant that the German forces had much less time than expected before the onset of the rains in Russia, and the tough Russian winter. It was also found in the spring that German military production had been much less successful than expected, largely due to the unplanned and uncoordinated nature of the German war economy. The factor weighing most strongly in the German's favour was the element of surprise. Despite numerous warnings from a wide number of intelligence sources, Stalin obstinately refused to accept that a German attack was imminent. He could see no justification or rationality for such a move. Soviet supplies were punctually sent to Germany under the terms of the 1939 trade agreement. Hitler was bogged down in the west and south and could scarcely be expected to turn eastwards as late as the end of June. The element of surprise on the morning of 22nd June 1941 was complete.

The German invasion of the Soviet Union ended the anxieties felt in London and Washington about the possibility of a German-Soviet alliance to overthrow the existing world order. Soviet policy in Eastern Europe from September 1939 had lent weight to these fears. Soviet forces occupied eastern Poland on 17th September and a second German-Soviet agreement on the 28th September confirmed the Polish partition. Between 25th September and 10th October 1939, the Baltic states, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, were pressured to accept Soviet troops on their soil, and became in effect Soviet

protectorates. In November 1939 the Soviet attacked Finland after the Finnish government rejected demands for territorial concessions and Soviet basis on Finnish soil.

After a brief but inglorious campaign, in which the Red Army suffered 100,000 casualties, the Finns agreed to the Soviet demands. In June, while Germany was fully occupied in the west, Stalin seized the opportunity to incorporate the remaining areas assigned to the Soviet sphere of influence under the German-Soviet agreements. The Baltic States were fully incorporated into the Soviet Union, and Romania was forced to concede the territories of Bessarabia and the northern Bukovina, which had been taken from Russia in 1918. The Soviet Union put further pressure on the states of Eastern Europe, and in November 1940 asked German leaders for a further agreement which would give the Soviet Union control of the Dardanelles Straits leading from the Black Sea, and would turn Bulgaria into a virtual Soviet dependency.

The German war against the Soviet Union brought relief to Britain militarily. It was now possible for Britain to pursue a peripheral strategy in Africa and the Middle East, while building up large air defense forces at home and a bomber fleet to attack the German war economy.

The above will give you some insight into what was happening around Europe at the start of the war however further mention should be made of the activities which had been occurring in Holland since the invasion of May 1940. Late May and early June saw the evacuation of the British army from Dunkirk of the coast in Northern France. 299 British warships and 420 other vessels under constant attack evacuated 335,490 officers and men back to Britain.

On the 5th June Hitler proclaimed a war of total annihilation against his enemies. On the 8th June German armoured forces penetrated French defenses in the west near Rouen on the river Seine, on their way to Paris. On the 10th June, Italy, who became an Ally of Germany, declared war on Great Britain and France and on the 14th June, Paris was captured by the German forces.

The German war machine moved further west and on the 1st of July they occupied the Channel Islands, being the Alderney, Guernsey, Sark and Jersey Islands. They were part of Britain but are located close to the French coast near Normandy. The Germans used these Islands as their base for the attack on Britain, which is now known as the Battle of Britain and which began on the 10th of July.

The Germans made the north-west area of France near the area of Dunkirk as the base for their air attacks on Britain due to the short flying distance to southern England. The German aircraft were not built to fly long distances so the location near the coast as close as possible to Britain was important to the

Germans. At the same time (25th August) the British R.A.F. started as with their Lancaster bombers to raid the German war factories during the night. I can still hear the sound of these large planes flying over during the night on their way to Germany to do their destructive job.

As a 10 year old, this continuous humming sound was quite frightening as it would go on for at least an hour. On the 7th of September London sustained severe damage in the largest aerial attack since the war commenced, and on the 15th of the same month the battle of Britain ended with a British victory whereby the Germans lost 1733 airplanes and the R.A.F. lost 915.

On the 14th of November Coventry in England was heavily attacked by air whereby the Cathedral was completely destroyed. December the 2nd saw Bristol heavily bombed and at the end of December, in fact on the 29th the City London was severely burned by incendiary bombs whereby Guildhall and eight Wren Churches were destroyed. These bombes were created to cause maximum damage; incendiary bombes are filled with materials for causing fires instead of explosions.

On the 9th of November 1941 my sister Jan (Sjaan) was born and was baptized with the names Adriana Theodora Maria, obviously named after our mother. We were getting used to living with the presence of the German soldiers all around us and to having to live on smaller portions of food. Two or three times a week there was meat on your plate but the piece was so small that you would cut it up in very small pieces so that it would last you for the whole meal. But nobody was complaining because these were the facts of the time during the German occupation. Our Mum and Dad did the best they could knowing that it was not easy for them.

Everything settled down into a daily routine with us kids going to school, Dad going to work for the Eindhoven Council and Mum and Oma together looking after the family's needs of keeping the house clean, doing the washing and making and repairing kid's clothes. By the end of August 1942, Mum found out that despite all the worries of living during war time, that she was again pregnant.

In Holland, the 6th of December was "Saint Nicolaas" day. You can compare this event with Christmas day in Australia. The evening before, the 5th of December, was when Saint Nicolaas and his helper, Black Peter, would visit families and throw sweets and ginger nuts through a partly opened door for the kids to go for them. During the night they would come down the chimney to deliver presents stacked around the fireplace for us to find in the morning. That was how it would be in normal times. But during the war, when times were very hard, this was very much scaled down and we got just the very bare necessities.

Mum and Dad just could not afford luxuries. It was important for us to survive with what we had and nobody was complaining because we all understood. However, I will never forget, that next to us was a book shop, and next to that was a chemist shop. The owners name was Lachniet and they lived above their shop, like so many people did. They had an only son named Joop about my age and he was a friend of mine.

This particular year the 6th of December was on a Sunday and Joop invited me to come over to his place so that he could show me all the presents that he had got for Saint Nicolas day. It was all a matter of showing off what he got against what we did not get. I hated him for that! As I was looking at all his goodies, the air raid siren went which, as always, was a frightening sound and within minutes, low flying air planes roared over us attacking the Philips factories, which were used by the Germans to manufacture all sorts of war equipment. I remember racing down and out into the street to our house and in doing so, I could clearly see the planes coming over very low. The noise was overwhelming as they were dropping bombs on the factories less than one kilometer away from our place. Just around the corner, about 100 metres away from our house, a bomb was dropped on the pavement leaving a big hole in the ground and shattering many windows of the adjoining houses. In our house the safest places were between the staircase walls and under the dining room table, and that was were we stayed during these air raids. We found out later that the plane, that dropped this bomb, must have lost control and flew into the side of the Phillips factory killing its pilot.

From the 26th of March 1942 the Nazis began deporting the Jewish people from all over Europe to a concentration camp in Auschwitz in Poland starting an evil plan to eliminating the Jewish race. Other concentration camps had been established in Germany and Austria. From here on RAF planes started to carry out heavy air raids on Germany's large industrial area in the Ruhr valley where a lot of Germany's war equipment was made.

This was the start of a long offensive plan by the Allies to continually bomb German factories and air bases like the ones on the coast of Holland in July 1942. On the 10th of September the RAF dropped 100.000 bombs on Dusseldorf in less than an hour. On the 30th of January 1943 RAF Mosquito fighter-bombers launched two daring day-light raids on Berlin just as the Reich Marshal, Hermann Goering, was to deliver a broadcast, celebrating 10 years of the Nazi regime. From here on, the Allies continually bombed various locations over Germany in order to destroy their manufacturing process of war equipment. April 1943 was a month where a lot of things happened. The German's were said to be reinforcing the Dutch coastal defenses, anticipating an invasion in May, on the 15th the RAF dropped 8.000 pounds "Blockbuster"

and 4.000 pounds “Factory-smasher” bombs on Stuttgart and on the 21st the RAF bombed Berlin and three other cities to mark Hitler’s 54th birthday.

In the meantime on the 14th of April 1943 my sister Cisca was born and baptized Francisca Theodora Maria. On that day, I was only 10 years old as I was born on the 29th of April 1932 and was then the eldest of nine children. You could say that my Mum and Dad were blessed to be able to produce, in such a short space of time, a family as large as this, in such turbulent times.

On the 9th of May the Germans declared martial law in Holland in anticipation of an Allied invasion and a state of emergency was declared in the south of Italy amid fears of an invasion, while also a state of emergency was declared in the Ruhr area following the RAF’s “Dambuster” raid. On the 17th of May, walls of water swept down the Ruhr and Eder valleys destroying everything before them, after the RAF had attacked and breached two huge dams. The raids, by specially fitted Lancaster bombers using new “bouncing” bombs, designed to penetrate the dams at their most vital point, were planned to cripple Germany’s vital industrial heartland. One week later the RAF dropped 2,000 tons of bombs on Dortmund, it being the heaviest air raid to date. The bombing of various locations in Germany intensified as the Allies were starting to invade Italy showing that the tide of the war had turned in favour of the Allies. On the 24th of December 1943, President Roosevelt of the USA appointed General Dwight D. Eisenhower as the Supreme Commander of the Allies biggest operation, being the invasion of Western Europe. He took up his post of Supreme Commander as from the 16th of January 1944. Hitler was getting worried about the outcome of the war as he ordered the mobilization of all children over the age of ten to be involved in warfare, while on the 26th of March, Churchill said “the hour of our greatest effort is approaching”. Hitler must have been feeling the pinch as he suspended all laws in the German capital Berlin and made Goebbels dictator of the city, and to commemorate Hitler’s 55th birthday on the 20th of April, the RAF set a record for a single raid by dropping 4,500 tons of bombs on Germany.

On the home front in Eindhoven the family learned to cope with all the war tensions as it was well known that Germany was fighting a loosing battle and one had to be more careful not to get caught in any underground activity. Also my Mum found out again that she was pregnant with the tenth baby, who apparently was not planned, but these things just happened. Also my mother’s youngest sister, Coby, came down to Eindhoven to live with us. The situation in Rotterdam was getting worse, particularly with food and the German threat, so it was decided that my aunt Coby would stay with us for a while and she could help my Mum and my Oma with the household chores in this forever growing family. There is one incident that stays with me forever.

It must have been early September on a Sunday morning when I was leaving the Saint Catherina Church where I as usual was singing at the High Mass. I decided to walk home through the centre of town. The Germans were already retreating out of Eindhoven using whatever transport that they could find or even steal from the people. As I was walking through the Rechterstraat, a German soldier was walking near me with a riffle over his shoulder. This was a sight that we were used to over the last four years, but what happened next I will never forget. About fifty metres further there was a civilian riding a pushbike away from the soldier. He shouted something to this man and although I could not understand what he said, I realized that he wanted him to stop and handover his bike to him. Instead of doing this the civilian started to race away and the next thing was that the soldier raised his riffle and shot the man on the bike, walked to him as he was laying on the ground, took the bike from him and rode away, leaving the man for what he was on the ground. As I mentioned before, lots of people live above their businesses and in the Rechterstraat there were lots of shops with island display windows and I was shit scared hiding behind one of those windows. It did not take long for the people to gather around the man on the ground but when the soldier was gone I left the scene in a hurry. After all I was only twelve years old. It left a lasting impression on me and an anti German feeling for ever.

D-DAY:

The Allied troops storm ashore in Normandy on the 6th of June. This was the beginning of the end of the war and over the next couple of months the Allies gradually captured France, Belgium and Holland. Our place Eindhoven was liberated on the 18th of September and later on they named a square at the end of the Emma Singel “The 18 September Plein” to commemorate this historical happening. The fear of being caught as part of the underground movement was immediately lifted and it did not take long before the underground fighters started to round up the Dutch people who had been sympathizing with the German soldiers during the German occupation. They shaved their heads, male as well as females and than marched them through the streets allowing everybody to shout abuse at them, all this with the sounds of the church bells ringing and people dancing in the streets delighted to be free at last. I remember that we were in the attic upstairs throwing rotten pears through the attic window at the bald people being marched through the streets. As the Allied troops drove through the streets on their troop carriers with guns mounted on top, they were handing out cigarettes, chocolates and lollies and the people were all singing and happily enjoying their long awaited freedom.

From here on the Allies moved further north towards the rivers dividing the northern part of Holland from the south, where they met a lot of resistance from the Germans. The Allies also moved east into Germany at the same time. In a desperate preparation for the coming Allied invasion of Germany, Hitler, on the 18th of October ordered the call up of all able-bodied males from16 to 60 for a new force named the “Volkstrum” or the People’s Guard. The Fuhrer complained of “the defection of all his European allies” and said Germany now stood alone against “the Jewish international enemies”. In the meantime seven German generals who were plotting to kill Hitler were shot. His HQ was moved to the mountain caves at Salzkammergut, suggesting that Hitler was thinking of a last stand in Bavaria.

On the 25th of September an audacious airborne operation that promised to shorten the war by several months had ended in a bloody failure. General Eisenhower had tried to use his First Airborne Army to seize three bridges in the middle east of Holland which would give the Allies control of the lower Rhine. A US airborne division was to seize the bridges at Nijmegen and Grave, while the First British Airborne Division had to capture the farthest bridge over the Rhine at Arnhem. British paratroopers captured the northern end of the Arnhem Bridge, but the enemy held on to the town, and bad weather prevented the flying in of supplies. Reinforcements got through to the Americans at Nijmegen and Grave, but were unable to break through to Arnhem.

After eight days battling against huge odds, the British pulled back across the Rhine. As a result of this, of the original 10,000 troops, only 2,400 returned. It was also because of this setback, the Allies moved eastwards into Germany instead of in a northern direction across the rivers into the northern part of Holland.

The following months were hard on the people north of the rivers as food became very hard to get and the occupying German soldiers made life a living hell for the Dutch people. Many died of starvation and the only thing on people’s minds was how to survive until the war would be over. One thing they were sure of was that they soon would be free, but when?

In Eindhoven there was no way that they could send food over the rivers to family in Rotterdam as the Germans would take anything away from them once it got across. Life was settling down to normal, although food was still scarce in supply but not as bad as it was north of the rivers. As usual, Mum and Dad’s bed came down to the front room downstairs in early November and on the 18th my brother Frank, the tenth in the family, was born. He was baptized Franciscus Hendrik Joseph.

As I have told you before, my fathers youngest brother Jan had been living with us for a few years and when my mother’s youngest sister Coby moved to

Eindhoven to live with us, those two struck up a relationship. In a way this was predictable but under strict instruction from both my father and mother, they were told to keep it low key. And they did. Aunty Co, as she was called, was a welcome help for my mother and Oma but the only problem with the ever increasing size of the family, was sleeping accommodation for all of them.

The five girls and Aunty Co slept in the upstairs rear bedroom using one double bed and two single beds, while the four boys and Oma occupied the front bedroom using also one double bed and two single beds. The baby was in Mum and Dads bedroom.

When Uncle Jan moved to Eindhoven he got the small bedroom that was mine before and I moved into the front bedroom with Oma and the other boys. Now I must tell you what was happening every evening when we went to bed. Oma was used to saying the rosary once she got into bed and made us (the boys) join in once we got into bed as well. You can imagine what was happening. We started to fall asleep during the saying of the Hail Mary's. So she thought of speeding up the process a bit. She always used a rosary and as she was saying a Hail Mary, she would slip one of the beads of the rosary through her fingers and then instead of saying the next Hail Mary, she would say " and that one the same", slip another bead through her fingers and repeat the short version of the Hail Mary. The first time that she did this, it was quite funny. The end result was that the rosary went a lot quicker and we did not fall asleep. It is amazing that I still remember this from some sixty odd years ago.

Over the last couple of months of 1944 and early 1945 the Allies continued to bomb Germany at many locations putting every effort into destroying all their industries. You could say it was payback time for the damage that the Germans did to London back in September with their silent rockets called the V-2s. They were long range rockets, 15 tons in weight and carrying one ton war heads. They were being launched from Holland and Germany, adding to the havoc caused by the flying bombs. These V-2s gave no warning except for a "tearing sound, like an express train" as they landed vertically from heights of 5 miles at faster than the speed of sound. The first, which hit Cheswick in West London, caused a blast wave which was felt for miles.

The Allies bombing attack on Germany peaked on the 22nd of February 1945, when some 6000 Allied bombers pounded German transport lines. Only a week before that, in a night and day relentless bombardment, RAF and US Air Force heavy bombers had reduced Dresden, which had a population of almost one million, to a smoking ruin.

It was impossible to say how many people died, but estimates were at about 120,000. Total casualties could have been as high as 400,000. Dresden, famous for its 17th and 18th century baroque and rococo art and architecture,

and Dutch and Flemish paintings, had been compared to Florence. But the city was also an industrial centre and a communications link with the German armies on the Eastern Front. Even so, the devastating raids had provoked widespread criticism, although the theory was that this sort of terror bombing can destroy the enemy's will to fight.

Then on the 11th of March, more than 1000 bombers carried out the biggest ever daylight raid, destroying the world famous Krupps factories, and in doing so, breaking the backbone of the German supply system.

THE END OF THE WAR IS NOT FAR OFF

On the 30th of April, Hitler's Berlin was being crushed in a storm of blood and fire. Russian T-52 tanks had plunged into the heart of the Reich capital, and the Russians gained control of about one third of the city, which was in a state of panic. Soldiers were throwing away their weapons and deserting. Some had been rounded up by fanatical SS guards, who shot them on sight. Low flying Russian planes were machine gunning people in the streets. Everywhere, bodies were left where they had fallen.

Hitler was said to be in a subterranean fortress beneath the Chancellery and directing the "defence" of the city, though in the present state of chaos the word was scarcely appropriate. He spent his last days in the Berlin bunker ranting about the betrayals, cowardice and lies all around him. The end came that afternoon. According to survivors, who escaped while the Russians were virtually hammering on the Chancellery doors above ground, the Fuhrer slipped away into his room. Minutes later a shot was heard. Members of his staff found him on a sofa, dead from a gunshot wound in his mouth, a revolver on the floor. Beside him was the body of Eva Braun, whom he had married the day before. She had taken poison. It was ten days after Hitler had celebrated his 56th birthday.

Much had to be learned about the last days of the man whose maniacal spirit hypnotized millions of ordinary Germans and many not so ordinary industrialist, army generals and Junker landowners, who had put him in power. It seemed that long after Goering, Himmler and others who prospered in the Third Reich, had seen that the war was lost, and had got out of Berlin, Hitler retreated into fantasy and went on issuing orders for counter attacks by non existing armies. But the delusions of his last days were no more deranged that the words and deeds of his years of triumph, when he extolled the German "MASTER RACE", murdered his party comrades, and set out to exterminate the Jewish people. The Austrian boy who earned a few shillings painting picture post cards and went on to cause the death of some 30 million of people in Europe, millions of them Germans, still calls for an epitaph.

Churchill has it. “Hitler”, he said in that year of Britain’s lonely defiance in 1940, “is a bloodthirsty guttersnipe”.

MAY 7th 1945. PEACE CAME TODAY.

Peace came to a battered Europe at 2.41 a.m. in a small red schoolhouse in Rheims where General Eisenhower, the Allied Supreme Commander, had his HQ.

After General Alfred Jodl, Army Chief of staff, the German emissary, had signed the instrument of unconditional surrender, he said: “With this signature, the German people and the German armed forces are, for better or worse, delivered into the victors’ hands”. General Bedell Smith, Eisenhower’s Chief of Staff, signed for the Western Allies, and General Ivan Suslapatov was witness for Russia.

CHAPTER 4

AFTER THE WAR

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What a relief it was to be living free of the pressures of the war! North of the rivers it had been hell to try to survive with the extreme shortage of food, but from now on things could only get better and they did.

It did not take long before Uncle John, my father's youngest brother and aunty Coby, my mother's sister, moved back to Rotterdam to live. Aunty Coby moved back home with her parents in the Paradijs Laan and Uncle John moved in with his brother Henk. Oma stayed with us in Eindhoven and I can still picture her sitting on a chair in the dining room near the cast iron heater in the corner with a pan on her lap peeling potatoes for the family meal. Potatoes were the main ingredient of our meal, while meat played a significantly smaller part. As Dad at that time was the only bread-winner of our large family, you can understand that is just how things were. With Uncle John and Aunty Coby gone back to Rotterdam, the sleeping accommodation eased up a bit with me getting back my small bedroom over the kitchen and the girl's room above the dinning room a bit more organized with Aunty Coby gone.

With the war over, the directors of the Maasbode managed to get the newspaper going again using a makeshift office and an existing printing press in Rotterdam. You can understand it would have been a very humble beginning but with a lot of hard work and dedication from many of the people involved before the war, they succeeded in starting it off. Before the war the Maasbode had a morning and afternoon edition, but it was realized that just an afternoon paper was what they could produce and no more.

Of course my Dad got involved from the start and the left front room again became the office. His duties were to work on increasing the amount of readers, collecting their money and organize the delivery of the papers using men and boys on pushbikes with canvass bags over the carriers to carry the

newspapers. On the afternoon train from Rotterdam a large amount of parcels of newspapers came in the goods wagon at the end of the train. They were than transferred on a trolley and wheeled to the loading zone at the train station where the parcels were opened and the papers counted in heaps for each of the delivery men.

There were also a number of parcels that my Dad had to deliver to the nearby bus station for dispatch to the various villages around Eindhoven. This occurred 6 days a week all year round. Before the war Dad used to drive a van into Limburg delivering the parcels and he was doing this again now. As the Maasbode was a Catholic newspaper and as the southern part of Holland, being Brabant and Limburg was mainly Catholic, understandingly there were a lot of people supporting the republication of the Maasbode, which was good for our family because it provided my Dad with a steady income and a future for his for ever-increasing family.

In September 1945 I was enrolled in the Catholic High School called the “Saint Joris College”, which was the all boy’s school. Adjoining to this building was the all girl’s school called the “Saint Catherina Lyceum”. The entrances and the play grounds were all separate from each other, even the pushbike stands were apart. I was thirteen years old when I started at this school, not knowing in what direction that I was planning my education. When I was asked what I wanted to do when I grew up, my answer was, like so many kids said, I don’t know.

There were two directions that I could take to walk to school. The first was past the primary school in the Don Bosco Street, then across the Dommel River into the Elzentlaan. The other way was along the Frederick Straat, across the Frederick van Eden Square and through the Anne Frank Park. After a few months I started to get a fair bit of homework and because of the winter weather it was too cold to do my homework in my little bedroom which was not heated. It was impossible to do it in the dining room downstairs because of all the other kids around, so arrangements were made that after school I could stay in the class room and do my home work there. Now the school hours were from twenty to nine in the morning till twenty to two in the afternoon, with a short break at eleven o’clock in the morning. I was not the only one making use of this arrangement, so by about five in the afternoon, three of us went home walking across the Frederick van Eden Square. Along this square there were a number of street lights mounted on tall metal poles and because of it getting dark during the winter time, the lights were on by the time we walked past. It became a game to see if we could make the light go out by kicking the poles. Some times it worked. After a couple of weeks, they must have been watching us, and we got caught by a policeman. When we were questioned

why we were kicking the poles, I said that we saw some kids before kicking these poles and that the lights went out, so I said that if we were to kick the poles, may be the lights might come back on. You know what, he did not buy my story and took us to the nearby police station in the Grote Berg, where I was put into a top locker cupboard. While I was sitting there I managed to fall through the floor into the bottom locker causing some damage. My Dad was notified and he had to pick me up. The next couple of weeks I spent writing hundreds of lines and I did not kick the poles again.

By February 1946 my Mum found out that she again was pregnant now with their eleventh baby My uncle Willem, the missionary that was sent to the Belgium Congo in 1937 for a period of not longer than 5 years, came back to the monastry in Belgium to recover after being there for more than 8 years. In the Dutch language we would call him “Heer Oom”, which, if freely translated, means “Sir Uncle”. In this book I will refer to him as “Heer Oom”. When he came back, he was unwell from some malaria attacks. Not having had any proper medication during the war years in the Congo, had weakened him a fair bit. They allotted him a full year to get better and to relax and to meditate and contemplate his future. Now the monastry was just over the Belgium border and we in Eindhoven were about 20 km from the border, so it was easy for him to spend the weekends with us. He would come over by bus on the Friday afternoon and leave early Monday morning.

This was a real treat for Oma, who was still living with us at that time, because she had not seen him since he left for the Belgium Congo back in 1937. It became a routine for “Heer Oom” to go to the Saint Catherina Church on Sunday morning early to say Mass on one of the small side altars and I always went along with him to be his altar boy. Often Oma came along as well as she was naturally very proud of him. Most of the weekends, he spent playing cards with his mother, my Dad and Bertus, the barber’s son from across the road. I can still see them sitting around the table with the three men having a small glass of gin. Oma was not allowed to have any although she loved the gin, so what she did when my Dad was not looking, she would put her finger in Dad’s glass and than lick her finger quickly. After a while, as “Heer Oom” always wore a black cassock, he managed to hide packets of cigarettes in the pockets of his cassock which he smuggled over the border. He always got away with it.

I found out later why he always went to say Mass early Sunday morning. He got paid a small amount of money for doing so. Back at the monastry in Belgium they were keen for “Heer Oom” to eventually take up a post as a parish priest, which he tried to put off as long as possible.

Our family increased in size again with the birth of my brother Hans on the 29th of September 1946, making him the eleventh child in our family,

and as it was with all the others, he was also born at home. Hans was baptized Johannes, Albertus, Joseph.

I mentioned before the barber across the road from our house and alongside from him there was a three storey building where the family van de Hurk lived. They had a son called Theo, who also went to the same college as I did and he was my friend together with two others, Tiny van den Dungen and Ad van Dongen. We all went to the same school at the Saint Joris College. Now Theo's father had a hardware shop in the rear section of his mother's clothing shop at the ground floor of the three storey building where they lived.

So one day Theo and I decided that we would make a kite about 1.8 metres high with small push bike lights mounted in a V-shape on the edge of this kite. For this we needed some bamboo sticks and light fittings from the hardware shop and we used strong parchment paper to make up the kite. Then we looked around at the old airfield just outside of Veldhoven, a small village about 5 km west of Eindhoven, where we found some rolls of single electric wire that we could use. By putting the electric lights on the kite in series and feeding the 220 volts of electricity through it we could light up the V-shape on the kite. All we needed to do was use the two wires rolled side by side on a large reel connected to the front of the kite and to try it out. And we did try to fly the kite at the Frederick van Eden Square around the corner from Theo's house and it flew well in the sky.

Because of the weight of the kite and the electric wire we knew that we could not get it up a long way but about one hundred metres was not bad. We worked out that if we were to walk along the Frederick Street and the Hoog Street back to Theo's house, keeping the kite up in the sky, and using an electric extension to the reel, we could get the lights to come on at the kite. So in the early evening we got the kite up in the air as planned and then made the connection at Theo's house. It looked really good and we had plenty of spectators admiring the show of the lighted V in the air. The top of Theo's house was a flat roof, so we tried to fly the kite on top of the house as well and that went fantastic but there had to be a fair bit of wind to make it work because you could not run much on the flat roof. As I am writing all this, it is amazing what comes back into your memory!

Along the Kleine Berg, the street were we lived, there was a small grocery shop and they had a small display window alongside the door into the shop and under that window there was a metal grill and often you could smell the roasting of shell peanuts coming in to the street. As a treat for us all, one Sunday afternoon my Dad bought a bag of shell peanuts and got us all to sit around the dining table with the bag of shell peanuts in the middle. He then divided them up amongst us in equal amounts and all of us really enjoyed this.

There were not many of these treats for us at that time as Dad was the only bread- winner in the family.

One other thing comes to my mind. I started to make wall lights made up out of 4mm ply wood with a flat back and a shaped front with fancy cut-outs. Behind the cut-outs I glued red paper and inside I would mount a globe holder. It looked quite pretty, but in order to make them, I needed fret saw blades. So I approached the bloke at the hardware shop at the other end of the street and he said that he did not have any. Now with "Heer Oom" bringing in these "Players cigarettes" from Belgium for my Dad, I thought of a way to entice the bloke from the hardware shop to give me some packets of fret saw blades. Now as good cigarettes were very scarce at that time, you could get cheap and nasty smokes called "blazertjes" made from dry tree leaves.

Dad gave me two packets of "Players cigarettes". I then carefully took off the clear plastic wrapping and took out the "Players cigarettes" and then filled the packets with the cheap ones carefully replacing the wrapping. I then went back to the hardware shop and asked the bloke again for fret saw blades. He again said that he did not have any. I then showed him the two packets of "Players cigarettes", to which he then said: "I will have a look out the back". When he came back, he had two packets of fret saw blades which he gave to me in return for the "Players Cigarettes". During this whole episode, my friend Theo van de Hurk was watching me through the shop window with his nose flattened to the glass. I must admit that I avoided that shop for a while!

Now brushing your teeth in the morning and before going to bed was something we taught our kids to become a natural activity. However, when I was growing up in Eindhoven, it just never happened. As a result of not brushing my teeth and also because of the poor food, particularly during the war years, my teeth started to go bad and smelly especially my top front teeth. I remember standing at the top of the stairs at night crying my eyes out with the pain and my Dad saying that he would take me to the dentist the next day to have them pulled out. You know what, when Dad wanted to take me to the dentist the next day I said that the pain was gone and I did not want to go. The same evening I was crying again and then my Dad took me there and then to this dentist he knew and I had three top front teeth pulled out. The dentist showed me how bad they were and they really stank. The next few days at school I was made fun off, but they soon got used to it and so did I.

About three years later a fourth tooth was taken out and I was fitted with a plate containing four teeth, which was then quite a change in my appearance.

It was at the end of February 1947 that again my Mum found out that she was pregnant with her twelfth baby, which was quite a shock for her, but as in the past, these things just happened and like a good Catholic mother, she just

accepted this as a gift from God although I knew that my Dad had something to do with it! Just as well that Oma was still living with us to help out in the many household chores, as Dad was very busy with all the Maasbode activities. He also got very much involved with a number of doctors in setting up a community health scheme intended for every body.

In July, the Dutch government decided to send some troops to the Dutch East Indies (now known as Indonesia) to move against the Indonesian Nationalists at the Island of Java. On the radio they were calling for anyone that was available to fill the position of army Chaplain, someone who had had his vaccinations and had his papers readily available like passport etc. As it happened, “Heer Oom” who was still in Belgium, and about to be placed in a parish to work, jumped at the opportunity, and with permission from the monastery, applied for the position as Chaplain and was lucky and happy to be accepted. So he soon was off to the Dutch East Indies with the army.

The only one who was not happy with this was his mother, Oma, who was really enjoying his company over the weekends in Eindhoven. I did not mind him going as over the weekend I lost my small bedroom to “Heer Oom”, so I did not have to move out everytime any more. After the usual double bed shift from upstairs to downstairs my youngest brother Bert was born on the 17th of October 1947 and when he was baptized he was given the names of Hubertus Cornelis Jozef.

At number 62 in our street the Kleineberg, was a small jeweler shop. It consisted of only a small room at the front of the house with a little workshop at the back. The people who worked in it, like everywhere else, lived above their business. I got to know these people and they asked if I was interested in making bracelets from small coins. It involved drilling two small holes at opposite edges of the coin and then making little rings by winding some stiff wire around a steel pin, creating a spring and with a small cutter cutting the little rings to join the coins together.

Before I joined the coins together I had to put the coin on a little hollow anvil and than with a steel dolly tap on the coin to shape it. I spent hours in the afternoons making these bracelets, but after a while I got bored with it and I stopped making them.

I was always interested in playing music, particularly piano, but it was just not possible in our household of such a large family and very little space plus the fact that of course Dad could not afford to spend money on a musical instrument as he was only just earning enough money to feed his family.

My brother John, was able to help Dad with the family income as he had completed one year at a trade school for carpentry to learn how to use tools and operate machinery and he was by now working with a building contrac-

tor in the middle of 1948. Of course he was only earning a small wage but it helped with the income for the family.

As I was still very interested about playing a musical instrument, I started to think about getting a guitar, but again there just was not any money around in our family, so the idea came to me to see if I could make one. Someone told me that at the back of a café along the Heezer Weg, going towards Aalst, there in the function room every Sunday morning was a music club practicing their music and which was organized by a music teacher. I went there one Sunday morning to find out and after talking to this gentleman, he said that I could borrow one of his guitars as a model in order to make one for myself.

My Dad said that it was O.K. for me to do that as long as I kept up my school work at the Saint Joris College. Of course I promised that I would. I soon got some thin plywood, glue, timber, small panel pins and borrowed some tools from John and I started to work on making my guitar. In my little bedroom above the kitchen I had a small desk next to the top end of my bed where I was normally doing my homework. That was also where I started to work on making my guitar.

As my Dad was very busy with his work for the Maasbode, driving in the early hours off to Limburg delivering packs of newspaper, he did not notice that I was spending more time on building my guitar and less time on my homework. I found a music shop in the Vrijstraat in the centre of Eindhoven where I was able to buy the necessary parts like the mechanism to which the strings were attached to tighten them and the thin copper bars that had to be located at exactly the right spot on the top of the arm attached to the body of the guitar.

John managed to get me a solid piece of wood that I needed to make the arm out off, probable from the building site he was working on, and I started to make my guitar.

The first thing that I did was to cut and shape the top and the bottom of the guitar and then I cut strips of about 12mm of thin plywood and then by doubling the strips together with glue in between pinned together to hold the shape of the edge of the bottom of the guitar. When the glue was set I then glued and pinned this double strip all the way around on the edge of the bottom piece of plywood of the guitar. I did the same with the top piece of plywood. In order to provide support for the bridge, which was to carry the six strings on top of the guitar, I needed to provide a support beam of about 12mm X 6mm directly under where this bridge was to be located. Underneath this beam against the bottom panel and in the other half of the guitar top and bottom I needed to secure two more beams for added strength. Also at the other end of the guitar where the arm was to be mounted, I had to provide

some reinforcing timber inside of the guitar to which I could afterwards, when the guitar body was complete, fix the arm securely to it.

With no bandsaw to my disposal, I had to cut the shape of the arm out by hand and as you can imagine it was not easy using a sharp chisel and a lot of sandpaper and lots of time in order to make something of it. Then using the measurements of the borrowed guitar and the blade of a hacksaw, I carefully cut the groves in the top of the arm to accommodate the small brass bars. The shape of the bar is a bit like the shape of a mushroom with small dots at either side at the bottom of the stem. When tapping the bar in from the side, these dots would hold the bar in place. All what I now needed to do was make the bridge with a brass bar on the top and a metal fixture at the other end of the guitar to hook the ends of the six guitar strings. Also at the other end of the arm, I had to make slots to house the mechanisms for tightening the strings. All I had to do now was to apply three coats of clear varnish and I had made myself a guitar.

It probably would have taken me about four months to make my guitar and guess what, my school work suffered quite a bit with the result that at the end of the year I failed to pass my exams and on advise from the teachers at school, I was told to do that year again. You can understand that my Dad was not happy at all with my “efforts” at school and threatened to take me out of school and send me to work like John to help with the family income. Naturally I realized that my Dad was serious about what he said and as I wanted to continue at school, I promised that I would not disappoint him, if he would allow me to make amends. So I repeated year 2 at the Saint Joris College and finished at the same class as my three friends, Theo, Tiny and Ad. Because I was more than half a year older than they were, when I started year 2, they had started year 1.

On Sunday morning, after going to church early, I took my guitar in a cloth bag, which my Mum made for me, to the café at the Heezer Weg to the music club. I was anxious to start learning to play the guitar. Although I was proud of my instrument, it did not look like the other guitars at the club but the teacher after tuning it for me was surprised at the sound that it produced and he started me on the road to playing the guitar. Every Sunday I was there and I soon got the hang of it. What I did not know in the beginning was that the same teacher of the guitar club was also running the piano accordion club straight after the guitar club. Because I always loved the piano accordions, I just stayed behind and sat in the corner of the room and really enjoyed listening to the sound of about forty accordions playing at the same time. If you ever get the chance to hear a number of piano accordions playing together, then you will understand why I always stayed behind on the Sunday mornings.

At the end of the school year 2 that I had to repeat, I did a lot better than before, so when the school broke up for the summer holidays on about the 26th of July in 1948, I was told that I would go through to year 3, when the school opened again in early September. With about six weeks of free time on my hands and as I felt that I did not like the looks of my guitar, I decided that I wanted to make myself a better looking guitar during the holidays. So with the experience that I had gained from my first attempt, I started to make my second guitar, which turned out to look a lot better than the first one. So it was the second one that I took to the weekly Sunday music club at the back of the café at the Heezer Weg later on.

When September came around all the students at the start of the school year 3 had to make a decision which way they wanted to continue their education. The choice was either commerce or the sciences. The commerce involved studying more in-dept three or even more languages plus many more business-like subjects such as accountancy to do with the commercial side of activities. The sciences lent more towards the preparation for architecture, engineering and so on and it would put the emphasis on subjects of chemistry, mathematics etc. As I hated languages, I chose for the sciences, although we still had to do languages to a lesser degree. At this stage I had not decided what I wanted to concentrate on studying for.

The school hours were from 8:40 in the morning till 1:40 in the afternoon with the one lunch break at 11 o'clock in the morning of half an hour. Often, after school was finished for the day, I had to go straight to the railway station. The train that came from Rotterdam carried in the goods wagon a number of newspaper parcels that I then had to collect from the train on a trolley and bring them to the loading zone of the station. It was usually about 12 parcels and it was my job on my pushbike to bring them around to the Raiffeisen Plein, about 300 metres from the railway station, where various buses were stationed to deliver people to the villages around Eindhoven and which would also take the parcels of the Maasbode newspapers along. About a half hour job was needed by me to do this when my Dad was not available to do it himself.

You know my Dad, through his work with the Maasbode and being involved during the war in the under ground, got to know a lot of people, so he gradually got mixed up with various doctors and officials to set up a sort of health scheme for the benefit of the community. Therefore I was needed to step in for him at the railway station. It meant that I would not get home until about quarter to three in the afternoon. Now it was the custom in Holland that the hot meal was prepared for the midday. The school children in the primary school would go home at noon time and go back at 2pm for the afternoon session, so there was ample time for their hot meal. When I got finally home

after my job at the railway station, my Mum would always bake the left over potatoes for me as a treat, and I always loved my Mum for that.

Things were going well with studies at school and I kept up my involvement every Sunday morning with the music club at the Heezer Weg. I started to get the urge to make a mandolin, again borrowing one as a sample. It did not take long this time as I had developed the skill with the other two guitars that I had built before. A mandolin is a lot smaller in size and I soon got the hang of playing it at the music club.

Around this time I also passed my exams at the end of year three at the Saint Joris College. I was careful to give my studies my top priority and it paid off. During the school holidays I embarked on building another mandolin, using the one that I just made as a model, but the difference was that I wanted to make a twelve string mandolin, with four groups of three strings (the normal mandolin is an eight string instrument). It worked out all right but the three strings finished up very close together. At the music club they had never seen a twelve string mandolin and were surprised that it sounded alright, which it did. So now I had a choice of instruments to take to the club on the Sunday morning and I still stayed behind after our session to enjoy listening to all those piano accordions playing together. On one of these Sunday mornings at the music school I met a fellow who was playing a mandola. A mandola is basically a base instrument of the mandolin and considerably bigger too. I got very interested in this and I really liked the base sound of it so I decided that as the school holidays were coming up I would make myself a mandola and guess what, by the time the holidays were finished, I had myself a nice looking mandola.

It was nearing the end of the fourth year at school that our Heer Oom appeared back on the scene again. As the Dutch army was no longer required in Indonesia, he was not needed any more as a Chaplain, so he ended up back at the monastry in Belgium as before, awaiting instructions what to do next.

As luck would have it for him, a few weeks later, he heard on the radio that the emigration department in Holland was looking urgently for a Catholic priest to replace a sick chaplain on one of the migration ships. It had to be a priest who had all the injections for overseas travel and who had a passport intact. He of course reacted to this call immediately, applied for it and was accepted. Now at that time there were a lot of people emigrating, not only from Holland, but also from other countries like England, Italy, Ireland and many Eastern European countries to places like Canada, South Africa, New Zealand and Australia. As it happened Heer Oom was placed on a migrant ship called the Groote Beer, which was making regular trips to Australia.

I had just started my fifth and final year at school in September, when Heer Oom, in between trips to Australia, spent a week at our place, very much to the delight of Big Oma (grote Oma). His mother was still staying with us, although she was not so healthy any more and about to move back to Rotterdam to stay with family there. Heer Oom got all exited about Australia, calling it the "land of golden opportunities" and he explained to my Mum and Dad that they should look seriously at the possibility of emigrating to Australia.

With now seven boys in our family and the prospects of finding jobs in the future for them not to bright after the so damaging war years, the thought of a move to Australia became more exiting. When Dad looked into it, he found out that there was a growing trend of people emigrating to other countries. One young family, that Dad had recently met by the name of Mat and Kitty Iriks, were also toying with the idea of emigrating to Australia. They were about 10 years younger than my parents and we had many discussions with them about where to go to in Australia. I remember many evenings that they came over to our place at the Kleine Berg and started to teach us, the four oldest of our family, how to dance as they were very good dancers themselves and Kitty herself participated in the teaching as well with John and me.

I can still see Mat on his knees holding our ankles to force us to make the right steps with the foxtrot. At times it was really hilarious, but he just persisted in his teaching. In the end we all really liked them for it. A real friendship started to develop between the two families and when Mat and Kitty made up their mind to take the plunge and move to Australia, my Mum and Dad decided to do the same thing. Of course for us there was a lot more involved with 12 kids! Mat and Kitty went to The Hague to the Emigration Bureau of the Australian Embassy. This would have been about January 1951.

From here on a number of things took place. Big Oma (grote Oma) moved back to Rotterdam to live with her daughter as her health was really starting to fail. In fact I remember shortly thereafter that she was in hospital and the oldest three and Mum and Dad paid her a visit in the hospital. It was obvious that she had not much time left and we could see that she was really waiting for her son, Heer Oom, to come back from one of his migrant ship trips so that he could give her the last rites, and when he came home a few weeks later, she peacefully passed away. Dad and Bep went to the funeral as Bep was named after her. Mum was not in any shape to go as she had just lost the second baby before birth in a row.

At school I had a talk to my class teacher about our plans for the family and he realized that I needed to pay special attention to my English lessons as that would prove very important to me and also to our family. My English

teacher was a lady and she gave me extra time to improve my English, which at that time was very much appreciated.

Next my Dad paid a visit to the Emigration Bureau of the Australian Embassy in The Hague. He was given a lot of information relating to the move to Australia. The Dutch Government would be happy to sponsor our family, meaning that in our case it would not cost us anything, because my Dad was not self employed, but was working for the Maasbode. My Dad knew that his future with the Maasbode was not that secure as the future of the paper was not that rosy. Things were going backwards with the paper and it was quite possible that there would not be a job for him in the future. That was one of the reasons that he became so interested in Australia. He was informed, that in order to qualify for passage to Australia, he should have someone already in Australia, to provide us with documentation of guaranteed employment and accommodation. That would be quite a task to get that organized because of the size of our family! While he was there talking to the gentleman behind the counter, Dad was introduced to another man, who was also seeking information about Australia. He was the father of a family of 8 children and he was self employed. He was a carpenter by trade but had his own business as a building contractor. He was told there and then that he had to pay for his and his family out of his own pocket. My Dad can remember that he was quite wild about this but had no option but to live with that. His name was Albert Clynk from Laren near Utrecht and my Dad introduced himself as Theo Oorschot from Eindhoven. In parting they said: “You never know we might meet in Australia some day”.

When Dad got back from The Hague, he had a long discussion with Mat and Kitty Iriks. They were getting themselves organized to move to South Australia to a place called Peterborough, which is inland about 200 km north of Adelaide. There was a large workshop of the Australian Railways where he was able get work for himself with accommodation provided. After talks with our parents, they promised to stay in touch with us and when they had settled down in Australia, they would work on providing us with the workplace and accommodation requirements as needed by the Australian Emigration Bureau in The Hague.

It was about June 1951 that the Iriks family with their kids went by plane to Australia. There were a number of things that had taking place from the beginning of that year. Dad had started to follow a short course in bookkeeping, thinking that it might come in handy in finding employment in Australia and Dad, Mum, John and Bep had started to go to special classes for emigrants to learn the basics of the English language. As I had learned enough at school, there was no need for me to attend these classes. I put all my efforts in my

school studies as I was determined to get my final certificate at the end of the year. On one of his visits home from his trips on the migration ships, Heer Oom was very pleased that we were all so serious about what was originally his suggestion nearly a year ago.

At the Saint Joris College the final run to the year exams were coming up and everybody was working hard with many hours of study and repetition and as always for me it were the French and German languages that got the least of my attention. When the exams were over and we eventually got the results about three weeks later I was pleased that I had passed and that I was to receive my final certificate in due course at a special school presentation at the College.

To every one's surprise, of all the schools in Eindhoven, another student and myself got the top marks of 95% for Chemistry and I had good marks for all the other subjects of my chosen section. The results for the languages were a bit different. For French I managed to get only a 3 and for German I finished up with a 4, while for English, with a lot of help from the English lady teacher I got a 6. Now I was told that normally with such poor results for the two languages, I would not get my final Certificate, but as all my other results were high, that it would not be fair to flunk me, so it was decided that they would pass me just the same. At the interview with the school board they asked if I was going to pursue a future in chemistry, seeing as my marks were so high in that subject. I then told them that I was looking at going to the university to study civil engineering, but that my Dad could not possibly afford to pay for that on his income and the size of the family would not allow this. At the same time I informed them about our emigration plans to Australia.

As it worked out, my three friends, Theo, Tiny and Ad also passed their exams, so we decided, being good Catholics, that as a thank you to the good Lord, that we would undertake a pilgrimage, walking from Eindhoven to Den Bosch, about 30 km from Eindhoven, leaving at 12 o'clock midnight as a group praying the rosary as we walked along. Once in Den Bosch we then would go to Mass at the Cathedral and then afterwards we would take the train back home to Eindhoven. It was all agreed and organized and late July one evening we went on our way, attracting some attention as we went along. As a result of all the time spent on our studies prior to the exams, we were not very fit to do this long walk, so when we eventually arrived at about 7 am in the morning in Den Bosch, we all had terrible blisters on our feet and it was quite a struggle after Mass at the cathedral to walk to the railway station to catch the train home. We did get on it and when we got back to Eindhoven we thought that it was OK to make use of the bus to cover the distance from the railway station to home.

I shall give you some information about my friends. As I might have explained before, Theo van de Hurk lived in the left hand half of a three storey building at number 3 in the Hoog Straat, almost opposite us in the Kleine Berg. His father had a small hardware shop that he ran in the back of the ground floor of this three storey building. The family lived above this shop. Tiny van den Dungen lived with his sister and parents in a small house at Nr 24 in the Bergstraat. This Street runs between the Kleine Berg and the Grote Berg and his father was the private chauffeur for the Lord Mayor of Eindhoven. Tiny was one of the better soccer players of the college soccer team. Ad van Dongen lived with his sister and two brothers at Nr 12 in the Havenstraat near the start of the Eindhoven Kanaal (Canal). His parents were really nice people and his father worked in a company that was involved in refrigeration.

Now Ad was the oldest in the family and the second was his sister Martha (Matti). As I sort of took a liking to her, I starting calling at their place more often taking along my guitar and my mandola and enjoying myself and their family with playing and singing at their place many an evening. I remember when Matti's birthday came around (she would have turned 17) and I was invited to her party with my music instruments to celebrate the event. Now my Dad was very strict and I was given instructions to be home no later than 10 o'clock in the evening. But you know the party was so enjoyable, I forgot about the time and it was nearly half past ten when I realized what time it was. I quickly packed up my instruments and thanked her parents for the nice evening and I went back home on my bike.

Now at the left hand side of the front door was the bell. It was one those that had a round brass knob that you would have to pull hard for the bell inside to be shaken as the bell was connected to the outside brass knob. The sound was quite loud, but to my surprise there was no reaction from my parents, who were sleeping upstairs at the front of the house. After about five minutes I was considering giving up, when I noticed across the road that a man sitting in front of his window must have realized that I was not getting any response, so he indicated through the window that he would use the telephone in order to attract my Dad's attention. I could then hear the telephone ringing, which was in the downstairs office. Even that failed, so after about 10 minutes I decided that my Dad was not letting me inside because I was too late coming home. So I got back on my bike with my instruments and paddled back to Matti's place.

They were surprised to see me back again and I explained what had happened at our place with the request, could I stay the night? I slept on the couch in the lounge and the following morning Matti's Dad promised that he would phone my Dad to explain what had eventuated. Knowing my Dad, I expected that I would really cop it when I did get home that morning, but

nothing happened, so Mr. van Dongen must have been able to convince my Dad that it was the truth about the business with the door bell. Later on Dad said that he never heard the bell at all, so he must have been fast asleep.

After a week, now that I was finished at school, Dad thought that I should seek some work. We had definite plans to emigrate to Australia, just as soon as we could get the required information about work and accommodation from Mat Iriks, so it became important to get some knowledge about motorcars as we started to realize that Australia was a big country, where you just could not do without transport. Now Dad knew some people in Geldrop, about 5 km east of Eindhoven, who had a service station with a motor mechanic workshop and he organized it for me to start there as a volunteer. That means that I was to work there for nothing while they would teach me some aspects of the motor trade. Also, at their expense, I would get proper driving lessons in order to get my drivers license. In the workshop I did a lot of repairing flat tires, which was hard work, especially as I was not used to hard physical work being a student all my life, but I persevered and after getting home on my pushbike every afternoon, I had some early evenings going to bed.

When I got my drivers license, I often had to go out on the jeep to pick up cars that got stranded with some problems that needed fixing up in the workshop. The owners of this service station got wind of the fact that the Catholic Bishop of Den Bosch was selling his big black 1938 Ford Lincoln Zephyr sedan that had a V12 motor in it. It was the V12 that they were interested in. The story goes that the first one of this particular car was designed to be the car for the US President. The Ford Motor Company thereafter manufactured 19,000 Lincoln Zephyrs with V12 motors in it and sold them all over the world. So they bought this particular car from the Catholic Bishop, took the V12 motor out and mounted it in their pick-up truck that they used for hauling heavy vehicles. In the Ford Lincoln Zephyr they put a V8 motor and then used this modified car as an up-market taxi. I had the pleasure of driving this powerful pick-up truck at times and it was quite an experience. I remember that at one time the local milkman had trouble with his milk cart, so I had to drive him around in the jeep with a trailer loaded up with milk. What I got out of it was a lot of free milk during the day.

It was in August that we were told that Mum was expecting another baby. This was apparently not planned and therefore quite a surprise. Mum and Dad knew that if at the time of departing for Australia, Mum was more than five months pregnant, she would have to wait until the baby was born and then the baby would have to be six months old before we would be allowed to travel to Australia. So they decided at this stage to say nothing and just hope the required info from Mat Iriks would be coming soon. You can understand

that this was an anxious time for all of us. Now my mother was a short stocky person with a body, which as a result of so many babies, needed to be contained in a corset. Now I don't mean this in a derogatory way but I cannot ignore the fact that my Mum was quite big and therefore you could not tell that she was pregnant. Just as well!

In the meantime we started to make a lot of preparations for the coming move to Australia, like packing cases and suitcases and deciding what to take in the form of bedding and house hold goods and all sorts of clothing. And then we just waited and waited and waited! Then one day we received a letter from Mat Iriks that he was getting close to providing the required information.

CHAPTER 5

AUSTRALIA

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It was on the 1st day of January 1952, New Years Day, when we, just about the whole family, were walking from home over the Grote Berg to the Saint Catherine Church to attend Mass as New Years Day was treated as a Sunday. As we were walking to church, a postman on his push bike was riding in the opposite direction and my Dad said: “he is probably delivering a message to our place”. The reason he said that was because a postman would not be about on a holiday. So when we got home after church, guess what, there was a telegram from Australia to let us know that all the formalities for our emigration had been sent to the Emigration Department in The Hague and my Dad had to contact them for information regarding our passage to Australia.

We already knew that because of the size of our family, we would not be flying to Australia but we would be going by boat. So the next day Dad telephoned The Hague and he was asked to come with Mum and documented proof of the size of our family in order to make arrangements for our trip to Australia. Documented proof would be in the form of the “Trouw Bookje”, which is a small recording booklet, issued to each newly married couple, in which every birth is registered by an official like a Doctor or a Priest, or a registrar at the birth and death registration office. The work available for Dad, John and I was to be at the Railways workshop in Peterborough and the accommodation was at a large empty farmhouse about 10 km outside of Peterborough. It all sounded very exiting and when Mum and Dad came back from The Hague, we were informed that the family was booked on the Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, to leave from Amsterdam on the 23rd of January this month. Just as well that we had made a lot of preparations in the meantime.

The one thing we were not prepared for was that it was starting to get colder than usual for that time of the year. Of course the management of the Maasbode was told beforehand of our plans and they organized for someone



PIONIERS VOL GOEDE MOED

Veertig Eindhovense emigranten naar Australië

Groot gezin gaf het voorbeeld

(Van onze verslaggever)

De meest gangbare deunen van de laatste jaren klonken gistermorgen in een der drie bussen, waarmede een aantal emigranten, onder wie veertig Eindhovenaren, onder leiding van Reisbureau „Brabant" naar Amsterdam trok, waar de „Johan van Oldenbarnevelt" reeds onder stoom lag om ruim 1400 Nederlanders naar Australië te voeren. Het waren meest jonge kelen, die de bus volzongen, en zij behoorden tot het jongste halve dozijn van vader en moeder Oorschot, die de grote oversteek met twaalf kinderen hebben aangedurfd. Het jonge goedje hielp menig oudere emigrant over de droefheid van het afscheid heen, mede door de bezienswaardigheden en al het nieuwe, dat zich op weg naar de boot voor de jeugdige ogen ontrolde en dat dringend om voor kinderen bevattelijke uitleg vroeg.

This is a copy of a report in the local newspaper in Eindhoven.

to move into our house upon us moving out and Dad's replacement was to spend some time with him that last week that we were there in order to get the gist of things. The last three weeks passed with all the packing, including a large heavy duty timber box of 2m by 2m by 2 m high. This box had to be transported to Amsterdam the day before departure in order for it to be loaded on board the ship.

Passports for the whole family had already been applied for and made available well before Christmas. So after they picked up the big timber box and various other crates on the day before departure, we said our farewells to our neighbours and friends. The next morning at 6 am the bus would pick us up with many other people to take us to Amsterdam where the Johan van Oldenbarnevelt was ready to take us on board. As Dad was so well known in Eindhoven, the reporter of the Eindhoven Dagblad was there to interview all the emigrants leaving for Australia. There were three buses in total with 40 emigrants from Eindhoven alone. The rest were from the surrounding villages. For me it was my second trip to Amsterdam, because during my final year at the Saint Joris College, I had been given the opportunity to join a number of students to go to a school concert in Amsterdam conducted by a

famous pianist. He was fabulous and I have never forgotten this event. I cannot remember the musician's name, but he played some wonderful classical pieces.

There were about 1400 migrants on board of the Johan van Oldenbarnevelt and it took all day for them to get settled in on-board. We were allocated three cabins all with double bunks. It was a bit crowded but we were happy that finally we were going to Australia. There were two large dining areas for the three meals, although the younger kids were to have the evening meals earlier under supervision of the oldest sibling. In our case it was Bep that was allotted the task to look after our younger ones. She would then join the rest of the family later for the evening meal. I can remember that it was very cold in Amsterdam when the Johan was getting ready to move away from the quay and to proceed along the North Sea Canal to Ijmuiden at the North Sea. It was reported to be minus 15 degrees Celsius, which was well below average for that time of the year. It was a fantastic sight to see the ship moving along the canal towards the sea. It did not take long and we were at sea starting a new life to the other side of the world.

The next day we found out that the Catholic Chaplain, a Father van Stockum, was looking for some altar boys to assist him at Mass every day. As I had been the regular altar boy with Heer Oom, I offered to make myself available and then there was also another young man by the name of Chris Alkemade, who offered to do the same thing. His family was destined for Melbourne in Victoria. In Holland they were involved in the flower and bulb industry in Aalsmeer near Haarlem and were hoping to do something like that in Australia as well. One of the games rooms on board was made available as a Chapel.

On the second day as the ship was moving south, my Dad met the gentleman that he was introduced to at the Emigration Bureau in The Hague. It did not take long for both families to meet up. The Clynk family consisted of three girls and five boys. The oldest was a girl who also had the job of looking after her younger brothers. Her mother was a rather large lady who from the first day on was always very seasick, while my mother, because of her nearing the end of her pregnancy, as you can understand, was not the happiest person on board either. As time went on and everybody got settled into some sort of a routine, doing games and finding your way around the ship, the families started to get to know each other. Particularly the oldest girl of the Clynk family, (her name was Riet), and my sister Bep. I suppose, as they were given similar duties, they had a common bond.

As a point of interest, we were told that the Johan van Oldenbarnevelt was used as an army ship carrying troops for a number of years. Then it was decided that because of the increase of emigrants from Holland to various countries around the world, it was best to refurbish the ship to make it more suitable for

this purpose. Our voyage was the first one since it had been upgraded. As we were going through the Gulf of Biscay, about in line with the South of France, the ocean became a bit rougher. We were told that this was to be expected. We soon got through it and when we sailed through the gap between the south of Spain and the north of Africa, the view of the Rock of Gibraltar, was quite spectacular.

This little piece of rocky outcrop was and still is owned by the British as a very strategic location to the shipping industry. Life on board the ship started to settle down to a routine and about a week later we got to the start of the Suez Canal and the ship moored for a short period at the wharf in Port Said. It needed to take on fuel and other supplies. The Chaplain, Father van Stockum apparently was running low on his stock of hosts which were used for the Holy Communion during Mass, and he had arranged that he could pick up some from the monastery in Port Said.

As a surprise to Chris and me, for being his altar boys, he asked us to come along with him as there would also be some sightseeing of the harbour and town. Father van Stockum organized a taxi and we left the ship in the morning. The taxi driver took us through some of the poorest areas of the town where beggars were approaching us and kids almost without clothes on, roamed in a lot of filth giving a good indication of the state of living standards in these parts of the country. Egypt would not be my choice of country to settle down in, but then we had not been used to these conditions in our young lives. We soon got to the monastery, where we were offered a nice cold drink. The temperature in Egypt was quite warm despite it being early February, but Egypt is near the equator and that made a difference. After Father van Stockum received what he came for, we were driven back to the ship before it continued its journey through the Suez Canal.

Now the Suez Canal is nowadays a very important thoroughfare for ships to move from the Mediterranean sea to the Indian Ocean, which is a much shorter way than having to go around the west side of Africa in order to reach countries like Australia, India or the Southern part of Asia, which was the only way before the Suez Canal was opened. The Suez Canal was built by a Frenchman by the name of Ferdinand de Lesseps using Egyptian forced labour. During the construction, which took some 30 odd years, about 120,000 workers died. The canal finally opened in November 1869. Even now the length of the canal from Port Said to Suez measures163 km and at its narrowest point it is only 300 metres wide. To protect the banks of the canal from any wash, the speed of our ship was slowed down considerably as you can understand. After reaching Suez at the end of the canal and then entering the Gulf of Suez and The Red Sea, we were back at normal speed again.

We soon entered the Indian Ocean and had a long uninterrupted stretch of more than two weeks to reach Fremantle. This part was quite boring as there were no other ports to call into. During this stretch I got involved in chess competitions which, I had learned to play during my time at the college. I was very average at it but it passed the time and through the games I met some of the other passengers.

The Clynk family was organized to get off in Fremantle, while others were getting off in Adelaide, Melbourne or Sydney. We knew of course that our destination was Adelaide in South Australia. Chris Alkemade and I were seeing each other at Mass every day, being the altar boys, so naturally we spent a fair amount of time together talking about what it was going to be like settling down in Australia.

As his family was always working the land, they would also be looking at farming as an alternative to the bulb industry. My Mum was having a hard time, spending most of her time in the cabin on her bunk, just hoping that the voyage would soon be over. I came across the Clynk family a few times, noticing that Mrs. Clynk was spending a lot of time on the deck chairs on the deck, I suppose to get some fresh air and of course on the Sunday morning in the Chapel attending the Mass with Father van Stockum. I could not help noticing the oldest girl, Riet Clynk, at the church service and I liked what I saw. But than I was only 19 years old and as I found out later she was only 15 at that time. I was not the only one observant by nature as I noticed, so was Chris. He seemed impressed by Riet Clynk's appearance as well, but then could you blame him, she was worth looking at!

On the 23rd of February we entered the harbour of Fremantle and what a sight it was. On the left hand side was a large amount of cranes used for the loading of containers onto container ships and on the right hand side was the large wharf for the passenger ships. Slowly the Johan van Oldenbarnevelt moved into the harbour and then with the help of two large tugboats, with a lot of tires fixed to their bow, slowly pushing against the side of the ship in order to move it alongside the wharf. Quite an interesting exercise to watch and I was not the only one doing it. The railing was full of people anxious to see what Australia looked like. What we did notice was that the temperature was a lot higher than what it was when we left Holland one month ago.

When the ship was fully tied up to the wharf, we were notified on the public address system that there was a problem in the Fremantle harbour. The unions had called a strike the day before. All the people that were to leave the ship here in Fremantle could do so but there were no "wharfies" available, because of the strike, to assist with the unloading of their luggage and crates from the hold of the ship. They asked those that were to travel on, to help the

ones that were leaving in Fremantle with the unloading of their belongings and of course there were plenty of helpers around. We were also informed that the strike was to be for at least 10 days and it could be for longer.

We were amazed that this was happening as we were not used to strikes in Holland. Chris and I and even my brother John helped the Clynk family disembark with all their belongings and when they were ready to leave, Chris said that he might come and see them the next day. They had already told us that they were going to North Beach, which was just north of Scarborough right on the beach front. After they had departed, Chris asked me if I would like to go with him in the morning and I jumped at it as I saw it as a welcome adventure and a change from the monotony of the sea voyage. My Dad said that it was OK as long we were back in time for dinner at night. We decided that we would leave at 8 o'clock in the morning.

The first thing we did in the morning was to get a map of Fremantle and Perth in a newspaper shop just behind the harbour buildings and we started to walk in the direction of Perth. We had no idea how far it would be and how long it would take to get to North Beach and we soon realized that walking was not the way to go and decided that we should try to get a lift from someone. We were amazed how quickly we were picked up by somebody in Fremantle. He said that he was going to Perth and told us to hop in. Chris had learned a bit of English back in Holland as well, so between the two of us, we were able to tell this bloke that we had just arrived from Holland as migrants and because of the strike in Fremantle, we were stuck there and we intended to visit friends in North Beach who just went there yesterday.

We were travelling along the Stirling Highway to Perth, when he pulled into the parking lot of the Captain Stirling Hotel and offered us, as a welcome to West Australia, a glass of Swan lager beer. It was the first beer we ever had in Australia and it really was appreciated and it gave us an indication of the hospitality of the Aussie. He dropped us of in the city and told us to find the beginning of the Scarborough Beach Road. After getting a couple more lifts we arrived in North Beach and after some questions around we found the Clynk family in a sort of small beach house.

The sun was really belting down on us and as their beach house was only just back from the beach, the water looked very attractive to cool down in. Riet and some of her brothers soon got to the beach and into the water. It all looked very inviting but something was missing…..no bathers. Chris and I finished up going in the water in our undies. I don't think Riet and the boys were worried and as long as you stayed under water nobody would notice we thought and it was a lot cooler. The only thing was that we got quite sunburned a lot in the sun. It was nice to catch up with the Clynk family and in the

afternoon we found our way back to the ship using the same type of transport as before.

Two days later there was a message on the public address system for a Mr. Theo Oorschot to present himself at the purser's office as there was someone there that wanted to talk to him. So Dad and I went to see who wanted to talk to him. The person introduced him self as Kees Gabriels. His wife was related to my mother's side of the family. We got the whole of our family together to meet him and of course my Mum was exited to meet a family member just out of the blue.

Apparently he had received a letter from Aunty Coby in Rotterdam that we were on the Johan van Oldenbarnevelt on the way to South Australia. He only received the letter the day before and had the strike not been called, he would have missed us by a few days. Kees and his wife Bep and their son and three daughters lived in Safety Bay, some 30 Km south of Fremantle. Kees and his family had migrated to West Australia about years ago and at that he was driving a bread delivery van around district of Rockingham near Safety Bay, while waiting for a positio come up with a Dutch dredging firm that wa carry out a large dr ing job just outside Fremantle harbour.

He was a fully qualified draftsman fr Holland who had earn his qualifications with Dutch Fokker Compa the aircraft manufac ers. His question was: " Why South Australia"? What is wrong with W Australia"? He then w on to explain that W Australia was a much better place to settle



This is Father Pieters who was going to be so helpful to our family as time went on.

down in than South Australia. According to him W.A. had a great future and it would offer us a lot better opportunities for the size of our family than S.A.

Of course we could not know but were quite happy to take Kees's word for it, seeing as he had been here already for two years. Dad asked the question about the requirements of accommodation and work. Work should not be a problem he said and he was right because since the ship had been secured at the wharf some five days ago, there were a number of bosses looking for trades' people and even now they were making inquiries with those that were still on board waiting to see what was going to eventuate with the strike. The other thing was the accommodation.

Kees said that he was sure that he could organize that for us in Safety Bay where he lived. So we needed for us to make a decision as to either wait for the strike to finish and go on to S.A. or to get off here in W.A. It was clear what we all wanted to do, particularly Mum who was nearing the end of her pregnancy. So we decided to get off here.

As Kees knew his way around, he took Dad and me in his van to Perth to the Emigration Bureau in Hay Street, just west of King Street. Dad brought all his papers along that he had received from the Australian Emigration Bureau in The Hague and it did not take long to get the approval to disembark in Fremantle. From Perth Kees took us straight to Safety Bay, to introduce us to an elderly man, a retired farmer, that lived just one street back from the beach and he showed us a beach cottage just opposite his place that was empty with one bedroom and a lounge inside and an enclosed L shape verandah on the front and side. In the back yard there was a shed about 6m X 3m with a concrete floor that could be used as two bedrooms.

We decided to take it as the rent was quite reasonable. Kees then took us back to the ship and we started to make arrangements to make the move to Safety Bay. The next day, while we were still on board, somebody made inquiries about tradesmen interested to start work immediately. John and I offered ourselves as carpenters and the man introduced himself as Tony Hermans. He explained that he was in partnership with a Dave Taylor and the work was in a place called Moora about 120 Km North of Perth. As it turned out this Tony Hermans was a Dutchman and an electrician by trade. The arrangements were that we had to be opposite the Perth railway station on the following Monday morning at 8 am and they would pick us up in a one ton Volkswagen pickup truck and drop us off at the same place next Friday week in the late afternoon.

Friday morning Kees was back with a friend of his with a small truck and his van and we moved all our luggage and crates including the 2M x 2M x 2M wooden crate. Mum was very happy to finally get off the ship and looked forward to moving into something permanent as she was feeling very

uncomfortable in her condition. It was late in the afternoon when we arrived at Safety Bay and we were met by Bep Gabriels and their kids. After unloading everything in to the cottage we all went to Kees's place where we were offered some dinner, which was very nice of Kees and Bep. We had the weekend to get ourselves organized in the cottage and the shed. The shed was divided into two areas by means of two blankets hanging from the roof above separating the seven boys from the five girls. The mattresses were just laid on the floor. In the cottage, the bedroom for Mum and Dad with the double bed and a small crib for the coming baby, provided some comfort for them, which was well deserved after the hardship of the trip on board the Johan van Oldenbarnevelt.

Before we left the ship Dad asked the captain to inform Mat and Kitty Iriks, who would be waiting for us in Adelaide, about what happened in Fremantle with the strike and our subsequent change of mind about getting off in Fremantle.

One thing I forgot to mention was that when Dad paid his last visit to the Emigration Bureau in The Hague, he was invited to the Australian Embassy to collect some papers and there he was presented with what they called: "landing money". It was ten Australian pounds per person, for our family, in total 140 pounds. Dad managed to save some money leading up to the departure from Holland as well, so all in all there was some money to start off with. Dad was not going to look for work until after the baby was born.

Monday morning at 8 o'clock in the morning John and I were picked up in Perth opposite the railway station with our tool box. It was John's tool box as I had none at that stage. There were three people sitting in the front cabin of the Volkswagen pick-up truck, so we were told to sit on the back of this small truck and off we went to Moora.

On the way they called in at a number of places to pick up all sorts of building materials and we finally drove into Moora by about 6 o'clock in the afternoon. But that was not the end of the trip. From there we entered a gravel road. Very dusty and bumpy and finally we got to a farm where we were to work the next day. By this time we were ratshit! We were offered a meal by the farmer's wife consisting of cooked unpeeled potatoes, cooked pumpkin and very fatty mutton. You can imagine that after the long day on the road we were hungry but were not used to this type of food. We ate most of it and as we were to start at 6 o'clock in the morning, they took us to the old shearing shed where there were some old iron beds with thin mattresses and plenty of spider webs hanging over us, full of big spiders. We were shown the showers and found out that the water for the showers came from a bore and was brackish. After one shower your hair stood straight up. Drinking water from the rain water tank was for brushing your teeth.

The next morning after breakfast we were taken to a large shed which was being built and ready for the concrete floor to be poured. The difference was that we had to mix the concrete on site. Along side two large heaps of blue metal and sand stood a concrete mixer with a hopper on its side. John and I were given the job of filling the hopper with 16 shovels of blue metal, 8 shovels of sand and 4 shovels of cement. After pouring some water in the mixer, we then had to empty the hopper in the mixer. While this lot was being mixed, we had to fill up the hopper again. This went on for about 8 hours with a short break for morning tea and lunch. We were both given a hat to wear and we were warned not to take off our shirts. That first day in the blazing sun, it became 118 degrees Fahrenheit, which is about 48 degrees Celsius, was very hard to take. We really cursed this country that day. The whole team of workers of 8 people, including ourselves, kept on saying that we would get used to it and that we should drink plenty of water during the day. The man in charge of the group was Arie Dekkers, also a Dutchman, and I got to like him after a while. It took five whole days, working like slaves, to finish the concrete floor of the shed. We both slept very well during the night and suffered a lot of pain working with the shovel all day, but as they said we would get used to it and we did. After the floor was finished we had to assist in doing the cladding of the walls of the shed with corrugated iron. The galvanized sheets were lying in the sun and were very hot. Really too hot to handle, but with a bucket of water to cool them down, and then with a tin snips we had to cut the angles on them before they were fixed to the wall framing.

I did get used to having a nail bag hanging around my waist and a hammer through the belt, as John had on his, and I started to feel that I was becoming a carpenter and the fact that we were earning money that was so badly needed by our family back in Safety Bay, made us feel good. We were, as agreed with Tony Hermans in Fremantle, to earn seven shillings and sixpence per hour per person. We had decided before we left Holland, that we (the oldest three) willingly agreed that for at least two years, would put our full wages in to the family pot and just accept some pocket money for our contribution to the family as Dad could not support the whole family on his own. We were very happy to do this.

So when the following Friday came around, after lunch, by means of the back of the volkswagen pick-up truck, we drove back to Perth where we were dropped of in Wellington Street opposite the railway station. We were both feeling very happy because I had 75 of hard earned pounds with me for the both of us. Now traveling on the back of the pick-up truck was not very comfortable and they would not stop while we were travelling, to allow us to have a piddle somewhere along the road. I was busting by the time we got to

Perth and not knowing my way around Perth at all at that time, I was looking for an isolated spot to relieve myself. I walked across the William Street Horse Shoe Bridge and found a spot that I thought would do. What a relief that was but it did not take long before a police officer grabbed me by my shoulder and as John was by my side, we were both taken to the police station which was directly opposite to where I had my piddle. I had no idea that the big building across the road was a police station and that this street was called Roe Street. Later I found out that this particular street was known as the street where the prostitutes were doing their trade. How was I to know this? Inside the police station we were questioned and we had to empty our pockets and there was the 75 pounds. It took a while before they accepted our story and we were allowed to go home.

By bus we were soon in Safety Bay and then we were presented with a pleasant surprise. Mum had given birth to a lovely baby girl and she was named Johanna Petronella Maria. She was born just a few days after we went to Moora to work. Born on the 5th day of March in the Rockingham hospital and there was no way that Dad knew how to let us know. John and I were pleased as we saw that Mum and Dad were very happy with the new arrival. With a good feeling from both John and I, we gladly handed over our earnings and we had a very good meal that evening that was not mutton and pumpkin. That weekend we had a visitor and it was the Catholic Dutch Priest Father Pieters who had looked after our family while we were in Moora. His assignment was to look after the Dutch migrants in West Australia and he seemed very helpful.

There was one more incident worth mentioning. Mum told us in all the gory details and it was quite funny. The toilet, like all the houses in that area, was an outside “dunny” which was nothing more than a large steel bucket with two handles on the side of it, inside a small wooden structure of about one meter square and 2 metres high with a door at the front. Inside there was a seating arrangement to sit on and inside it was the steel bucket. At the back of the “dunny” was a flap that could be lifted to take the bucket out. Now because of the size of our family, the bucket would fill up rather quickly, so Dad gave the boys an instruction that if they only had to piddle, to do this behind a tree in the back yard.

Once a week a table top truck would come along to pick up the full buckets and replace it with an empty one. By the time he got to our house, the bucket would be over flowing and Mum and Bep were curious to see how this bloke would manage. As the “dunny” was located at the side of the house, it could be observed from inside the window at the side of the house. And this is what they saw. The man had a large leather cover over his shoulder. He walked to the back of the “dunny”, opened the flap and secured it in an upright position,

then pulled out the completely full bucket, tipped it over a bit to get rid of some of its contents, than clamped a lid over the top and swung the bucket, still dripping, on the leather cover on his shoulder and then proceeded to the truck to deposit the bucket next to the other ones that were already on there. Mum and Bep thought that it was rather comical to watch and really enjoyed telling us about it later on.

After the heat in Moora we spent some enjoyable time at the beach in Safety Bay and also with Kees Gabriels's family and before we knew we were on the bus to Perth the following Monday morning early. What we did not know was that the episode at the police station on Friday afternoon was in the Saturday's Western Australian newspaper and the guys we were travelling with to Moora knew all about it. In the paper the article referred to "indecent exposure" in Roe Street and that street had apparently quite a reputation in that regard. So what, I just went for a piss.

The next few weeks we did all sorts of work on this farm station and then we went to the next job which was in Moora itself. John and I were given the job at the local primary school to line the inside walls with asbestos sheeting and finish it off with a timber mould. Quite a change from the work on the farm and we were working out of the sun, which was nice for a change. We were put up at the Moora Hotel sleeping on the upstairs verandah and we had our meals there as well.

We were allowed to work long hours if we wanted to and of course we did. When we got home after 12 days working, we found out that Dad had got himself a job in Fremantle as a labourer doing cleaning work at Brady's Plasterboard factory. They were tiring days for him as he was not used to physical manual work, but as a man with responsibilities, he just went for it. At night after his dinner, he went to bed early in order to be fit for the next day's work. The job was landed his way through the help from Father Pieters.

My brother Theo got himself a job in Fremantle in the City Bakery, as he had done some work like that before in Eindhoven. He did not last all that long there in Fremantle, so he then finished up at Mills &Wares for a while before he started work in a bakery in Rockingham. Bill was still of school age and went to the Christian Brothers School in Fremantle and all the younger ones, boys and girls, were enrolled in the Point Peron primary school. We found out how cruel kids can be to new Australians. Our surname Oorschot was soon pronounced as "horse shit". First our kids did not know what that was but soon learned and they just opted to ignore it. Bep started to work in the Shenton Park Hospital in Perth, but because of the distance from home she had to live in. After six weeks however, she left that job, in order to return home to help Mum and Corry as it was just too much for the two by themselves. Mum was

still very weak after the birth of Anne and the heat was very much affecting her as it was very hot in the little beach house.

In Moora Tony Hermans and his partners bought a block of land and built on it a large shed with a toilet block and washing facilities and some compartments to serve as sleeping quarters for all the men working for them. This would have saved them a fair bit as the accommodation in the Moora Hotel with meals provided would not have been cheap. In the shed there were cooking facilities as well as a large fridge and the cooking was done by one of the labourers.

Every so often they went out rabbit shooting to provide free meat for the meals and when my 20th birthday came up on the 29th of April, they wanted to make it a special day for me. So at night we were eating a mixture of cold rabbit, cheese and ham, plenty of peanuts with cold bear and cheap wine, while we were playing cards. All this time John was also with us and as the evening progressed I started to feel a bit sick. I suppose the mixture of all the rich food and the various types of drink got the better of me and by about 11pm in the evening I was so sick that I was standing outside the shed spewing my guts out thinking that I was going to die. I have never felt so sick in all my life. The other blokes thought that it was rather funny for me to react like that to my drinking on my birthday and all what I could do was to go to bed and sleep it off. That was the first and the last time in my life that I have been drunk.

After three months working in Moora we were told that there would be an adjustment to the hourly rate of 7 shillings and sixpence. Dave Taylor told us that it would reduce now to 6 shillings an hour. John and I discussed this and as we both were anxious to be home with our family, we decided that they could stick the job up there arses and we went home with our last pay packet in our pockets. Mum and Dad were surprised with this outcome but agreed that our decision was the right one. The following Monday morning we made enquiries at the Employment Bureau in Fremantle and we were told to contact a builder in Beaconsfield, just outside of Fremantle, who was engaged in the building of timber framed homes for the State Housing Commission and needed carpenters. We could start straight away and we would be earning 12 pounds a week for five days and Saturday mornings.

It was a lot less than what we were earning in Moora but we were home every night and that was very welcome. The work in Beaconsfield was very interesting as we were working with a group of tradesmen and we learned a lot from them. It was a bit of a hassle to cart your tool box on the bus but we got used to it. What was nice also was that we had the Saturday afternoon off as well as the Sunday. After a couple of weeks at home from Moora, Dad had a collapse at work. He was affected by a muscles infection called the sciatic

nerve at the hips. It was very painful and needed rest to cure it. Well he tried hard to work but his body just was not up to it.

Father Pieters was a regular visitor at our place and as Dad was home trying to get over his affected sciatic nerve, he and Father got talking about a lot of things. He was talking, amongst other things, about Geraldton which was some 300km north up the coast. Dad was always interested in growing fruit and vegetables, as he had done in Eindhoven during and after the war. In discussion with Father Pieters he was made aware about the tomato growing industry that was flourishing in a big way up there. Father Pieters promised to get more information about it and come back to us. A couple of weeks later he came back and said that the Tomato Growers Association in Geraldton was keen to talk to Dad particularly because of the size of our family. A lot of the tomato growers around Geraldton were large families, originally from countries like Italy, and other mid European locations. It sounded promising so Dad decided, after talking it over with Mum and the older kids in the family, that at least we should look into it. So arrangements were made that Father Pieters, Dad and I were to go and investigate.

We went by small plane to Geraldton on an early Friday morning and we had a good discussion with the people at the Tomato Growers Association, who advised us, that we needed to first of all settle down in Geraldton and then work towards securing some land and they would, with Government grants, assist us to get started. They showed us the possibilities available, if we were willing to work hard, and the older kids would have to participate in the activities. It all looked very attractive and the rewards looked very promising. We were introduced to other growers in the region and it all looked very impressive.

The next day we flew home with the task to discuss it all with the rest of the family. It was now about the beginning of August and the weather was very kind now so Mum was quite happy to stay where she was. I suppose that she was unsure of what Geraldton would bring her but Dad saw it as an opportunity to improve himself as there was just no future for him working as a labourer at Brady's Plasterboard factory. He had been back there now for about a month. So he and Father Pieters went back to Geraldton by bus to organize accommodation to suit our family.

Being the Catholic priest he was, he contacted someone at the Catholic Bishop's monastery to help him find some suitable accommodation and they told them that the Church owned a row of old houses along Durlacher Street, which was the street coming into Geraldton if you were coming from Perth. It was opposite the large concrete water tank on top of the hill and the large and impressive Catholic Cathedral was almost directly behind the group of houses.

One of the houses was empty and being repaired internally by the chap that was living next door to it. This bloke's name was Tony Heesters and his son Pieter was helping him in the work. They showed Dad and Father Pieters through the house. It had a lounge with an open fire place, two bedrooms separated by a passage through the middle of the house, an enclosed back verandah that would serve as a kitchen and dining area and a full width front verandah partly enclosed, which would provide additional sleeping accommodation. There was also behind the house a free standing bathroom combined with a laundry and a toilet. Compared with the cottage in Safety Bay, this would be a great improvement. Part of the outside was lined with old weatherboard and four gallon tins being flattened out in to squares and nailed onto the wall on one side of the house. From the road there was a drive leading uphill to the house made of old timber sleepers. Without them you would get bogged as the sand was very soft.

The house number was 152. Dad decided there and then to take it and made the arrangements with Church's Solicitor just down the road in Durlacher Street. The work at the house would be finished by early September and it would be available by then. When Dad came home from the trip to Geraldton and explained to Mum about the house that he had found there, she became as exited as he was.

CHAPTER 6

GERALDTON

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With the help of Kees Gabriels, we found someone with a truck, who was willing to take us with all our belongings to Geraldton. This chap had a five ton flat tabletop truck that should do the job. We still had the 2 M x 2 M x 2 M high wooden crate from Holland in the back yard. It was just being used for storage up until now, but it would come in very handy for the trip to Geraldton. In our planning on how to transport the whole family on this truck, we made wooden benches inside the box, along both sides and the back, and a small table in the middle. The front that acted as a lid before, was cut in half and fixed to the bottom of the opening, to act as a balustrade and to stop anybody from falling out during travel. A short stepladder hung on hooks just on the outside so it could be used to climb into the box.

On the day of departure the truck was there nice and early at six o'clock in the morning and the first thing we did was put the large wooden box at the very back of the tabletop with the opening backwards and everything else packed between the cabin and the box. The truck driver had plenty of rope available to tie it all down and with plenty of drinks and packed lunches prepared the night before, we were ready to move. Mum with baby Anne and Bep were to be seated in the cabin with the driver and the rest of us, 12 in total, tried to get comfortable on the blankets spread on the wooden benches in the box. Amongst other things hanging on hooks just under the back of the truck was a …. yes it was ….. a piss pot. By about 9 o'clock in the morning we were ready to go and Kees and Bep Gabriels were standing there waving us goodbye. They were not too happy about us going to Geraldton. They had no family here in Australia and they really enjoyed us so close by. Mum in particularly took to Bep Gabriels and said that she was going to really miss her. After all family is family. It was a tiring trip all the way to Geraldton and to pass the time we finished up doing a lot of singing.



The passengers are taking their seat in the box on the back of the truck for the trip to Geraldton. See what is hanging there?

It must have been quite a sight to see the truck passing by and then seeing the back of the box with all those people inside of it. With today's road transport laws we would have been in trouble real quick, but back in 1952 it was amazing what we did get away with.

We had a few stops on the way in order to stretch our legs and to accommodate the necessary calls of nature and to give Mum and Bep a break with the baby in the front of the truck. By about 4 o'clock in the afternoon we drove through Durlacher Street to Number 152 and backed the truck uphill towards the front of the house.



152 Durlacher Street Geraldton

With the help of our new neighbours, Tony and Piet Heesters, we soon got everything off the truck and into the house and the big box found a spot along the side of the house. We had a massive load of fish and chips for our well deserved evening meal before sorting out the bedding for the whole family in the various locations of the house. As we were all dog tired, we were going to do the re-organizing of the house the next morning. The truck driver decided to stay over in Geraldton for the night and drive back to Safety Bay in the morning.

Before we left Safety Bay, Dad had been corresponding with Mat and Kitty Iriks in Peterborough in South Australia. In one of his letters Mat had told us that the accommodation that he was able to secure for us was in fact an old dilapidated farm house about 10 km from Peterborough with only rainwater tanks and no electricity. There was apparently a generator there but it needed repairing. Really just as well that we did not go there in the end, and also the way Mum was, with the baby coming. In the last letter that we received, he let us know, that he had heard that the West had much better prospects for emigrants and that he was working on moving to the West as soon as possible.

Another thing that was important to Dad was the parcel of tablets that his Doctor friends in Eindhoven were sending him every year. You see he

was a very nervous man and had been for many years and that had become worse during the war years, when he was in the underground movement, facing being caught by the German SS. The tablets that were posted to him from Holland were called Roter tablets. They were supposed to kill the acid in his stomach that was causing his stomach ulcers. He had been depending on them now for a few years starting back in Holland.

When we were finally settled in using the long table made from flooring boards on three trestles and the wooden benches made from the same materials in the large enclosed back veranda, a setup already made in Safety Bay, we started to talk about the reason we had come to Geraldton for in the first place

So the next morning Dad, John and I went on our Dutch pushbikes to the office of the Tomato Growers Association in town to let them know that we had arrived in Geraldton and to ask for advice on what to do next. We were offered a cup of coffee and then we got the news that we were not expecting to get!

Late August there had been an unexpected night frost for a couple of nights in a row, with the devastating result, that a lot of the tomato growers had been affected to the point that they lost most of their crop. They were looking for financial assistance from the Association for a few years to get over the loss that they had suffered. Consequently they could not help us for at least two years. They told us that they were sorry about this but they had no choice but to look after the existing tomato growers first up. We had no option than to accept the facts as they were presented to us and to make the best of the change of circumstances.

So what now!!! When we got back home with the disappointing news, we sat around the kitchen table and talked a lot amongst ourselves: “What to do next”? Obviously we had to get work in order to earn money to feed the family and to pay the bills, so the outcome was, to present ourselves at the Government Employment Bureau in town, to apply for work and to explain to them the situation we had gotten ourselves into. At the Bureau the next morning, Dad, John, Bep and I had to explain why we were there and the man behind the desk soon realized the situation that we were in. After looking at a list that he got out of his drawer, he came up with the suggestion that we should present ourselves at the Railway work shops, just out of town along the road to Bluff Point, and for Bep to go to the Geraldton hospital, as she already had some experience before in Shenton Park hospital. He made a few phone calls to let them know that we were coming and within the hour we were taken on by the Railways, John and I as carpenters and Dad as a store man and Bep at the hospital. We were to start the next morning at 7:30 am and Bep was also to start the next morning. I tell you that took a load off our minds.

So the three of us left home to work by 7 o'clock in the morning on our push bikes, with lunches and our tool box strapped on the back of the bike. The workshop was a large shed well setup with many woodworking machines and work benches along the walls. The foreman showed us around and gave us some work like making a number of saw stools and small portable work benches, designed to be taken into the bush, when needed. Dad was put to work in the storeroom to sort out all types of goods that came in and needed to be stored on the shelves. Not a hard job and he took a liking to it.

The Railways owned a number of small timber cottages just along the same street past the workshops and we were sent there to some of them to do repair work. I remember in one where we had to take all the plaster ceilings down as they were sagging badly. What a dirty and dusty job that was! You can imagine what it was like. There was very little space between the ceiling and the roof so the stripping of the ceilings had to be done from underneath. Over the years these ceilings had collected a lot of dust and we were copping all of that. But it was work and we just put up with it. One morning we had a visit from a chap from the Union to check on the workers if they were members of the Union and of course we were not and he also asked for proof, that we were qualified carpenters. Of course John could present his papers from Holland, proving that he had served his apprenticeship, but I could not do this as I had none.

After a discussion with the Union representative he suggested that I should sit for a trade test and if I passed that he would organize for me to get a carpenters ticket. The following week I did have a trade test where I had to show the examiner how to sharpen and set a hand saw and how to set out and construct a wall frame. With a positive outcome I was then presented with my trade ticket.

In the workshop we were not so popular amongst the other tradesmen and this was why. For morning and afternoon tea time and lunch time as well, the other workers took at least an extra 10 minutes before their breaks, to put on the billy for tea, while John and I stuck to the designated times that were allowed for breaks. Then after about 2 months we were given the job of making 10 prefabricated bathroom combined laundry structures, that could be bolted together anywhere in the bush for workmen to use, when they were sent inland to do work. The structures had to be made from 4 x 2 inches of jarrah timber nailed together into frames with galvanized cladding on the walls. Now instead of just making one at a time, we cut out all the timber for the 10 units and after nailing the first frame together, we used that one as a base to do all the other ones on top of it. It would be a considerable saving of time in the long run. But you know what, the other workmen in the shop

complained behind our backs that we were working too hard. Now it was policy with the Railways that the first three months we would be working on probation, before we would be taken on, on a permanent basis. When we started we were made aware of this ruling. So one week before our probation period was up, I was called into the foreman's office and he explained, that as a carpenter you could be asked at times to travel on one of those carts that drive on the railway lines inland to carry out any work that might need doing and as I was wearing glasses it was considered not safe enough for me to go on these carts. For that reason they could not put me on, on a permanent bases and I was given a weeks notice. I could not believe that this was happening to me, as I was wearing glasses on the day that we had the interview with the foreman three month earlier. It was obvious to me that it was just an excuse to get rid of me, because the other workers in the shop complained about us working too hard. You can understand that I was pissed off with that, so I told the foreman that I would finish the same night and that I would collect my pay at the end of the week. When I then told John about it, he said that he was not interested to stay on any longer either, and he then also handed in his notice. Bugger the bloody Railways.

The next day John and I were back at the Employment Bureau and they were not happy at our treatment at the Railways but could do nothing about it and we just would not even consider going back there if they could be persuaded by the man from the Bureau to reinstate us. There seemed to be plenty of work about anyway and as a result of some inquiries he made, John was sent to the Geraldton Building Company, which was located near the harbour at the other end of town. They were and still are in a big way doing large commercial buildings and even mining projects as well as housing developments. They also had their own workshops, where they made joinery and cupboards for their own jobs on hand. John was happy to be working there and he never looked back. I myself was introduced to a builder by the name of Harry Abbott, who at that time was involved in building transportable homes, imported from Austria in Europe, and he needed a few carpenters to erect them and to finish them off. So we both got work straight away, while Dad stayed on at the Railways.

At home we built at the back a chicken run enclosed with chicken wire for two reasons, we needed the eggs and there was plenty of food scraps to feed them with. I can remember the time that Mum made for one of the birthday parties a large bowl of fruit punch with all sorts of ingredients including grapes and apple pieces and small pieces of orange mixed with plenty of red wine.

The next day Mum thought to throw the leftovers from the punch into the chook pen and you should have seen the reaction from the chooks when they

started to pick at the pieces of fruit. They wandered around, all happily falling over each other, making all sorts of noises as if they were drunk. It was a very comical sight to see those drunk chickens running around not being able to stand on their feet.

At regular intervals Father Pieters would turn up to see how we were getting on, which really was appreciated by Mum and Dad, and I think he was always looking forward for a good home cooked meal in the process. He really showed a genuine interest in our wellbeing. He always stayed over a few days and he then stayed overnight at the monastry along side the Saint Francis Xavier Cathedral just in the street behind our house. The Cathedral was a very impressive church and of course the whole family was there every Sunday for Mass.

The young fellow next door, Pieter Heesters, was gradually showing an interest in my sister Corry, who was staying at home with Mum to help her in the daily chores of the household. Corry was only 16 years old at that time and Dad was watching this interest from the boy next door with mixed feelings. Pieter was getting interested in my musical instruments and in particular my mandolin. I naturally explained to him that I made them all myself back in Holland when I was still going to school, and then he expressed the desire to make one himself. So using mine as a model, we went about getting the materials.

He needed thin plywood but 3/16th of an inch plywood was really too thick and there was not any thinner available anywhere. Now at his home there was a bed set with timber bed heads and upon examination there was plywood in the heads, only 1/8th of an inch thick, so you can guess what happened. The thin plywood was taken out and replaced with the thicker stuff. The rest of the parts were obtained in the local music shop in town. In the process of this exercise we became good mates which did not change for the rest of our lives.

When we arrived in Geraldton, Theo decided that working in a bakery was not what he really wanted to do. I suppose that the very early starting hours were not to his liking and just baking bread was very monotonous, so he stayed at home for about three months doing odd jobs around the place. When John started to work for the Geraldton Building Company, he managed to get Theo a job there in the workshop, making crayfish pots out of timber. That did not last very long either and as there was a lot of activity going on with Harry Abbot, where I was working, he soon joined me as an apprentice carpenter.

After about four months with Harry, the work started to sort of thin out and we were home for a few days without pay. I started to look around for

another boss and I came across a builder by the name of Austin Roach. He was doing a lot of work for the farmers around Geraldton and the first thing he asked was, if I had a driver's license. Yes, a Dutch one but not an Australian one. He was keen to take me on, with Theo as well, but I would be driving his Tempo Matador, which was a one ton flattop light-weight truck. A little bit like the Volkswagen that Dave Taylor had in Moora. So I straight away applied for my driver's license at the local police station and got it without any problems and I started on a job outside of Northampton about 50 km north of Geraldton. It was an extension to the farmhouse that needed finishing off. I was getting my meals at the farm so that worked out all right.

The next time I was back in Geraldton I bought myself, from the pocket money that I had saved up, a 120 base Hohner piano accordion. This was what I had wanted to buy for a long time, even back in Holland, but there was never any money to do this and now I was able to buy one. At the same time I bought some music study books with it and the next time that we went to a job in the bush, I took the accordion with me so at night I could practice on it.

Another thing that I did shortly thereafter was buy a gun. It was a Lithgow 22 caliber fully automatic riffle that would take a 10 bullet cartridge. So when we were working in the bush I would go shooting for rabbits and at the times that Theo was working with me, he would do the honors of being the cook. I remember on one job, where we were involved in building a completely new farm house and we had to build the roof on the brick walls that the Italian bricklayers had just completed. There was already a shed nearby which was completely open at the front and our metal camp beds were located against the back wall of the shed. I had my riffle located above my head on the timber wall railing of the shed. By 5 o'clock in the morning it would be light and at times, because of the noise of the cockatoos, I would wake up, and see a rabbit snooping around and I could not resist the urge of sitting up in bed and aim for the animal. What a way to wake up Theo in the process. The shot sounded very noisy in the shed as you can well imagine, and we got another rabbit for the pot.

From the farmer we borrowed some rabbit traps. They were clamps that you could set in the bush near rabbit warrens covered over with small light branches. We would set them early in the morning and then check on them after work. Any rabbits caught would generally only have a broken leg but were OK for the rest of it. Now if we were to kill the rabbits we would not be able to preserve the meat for very long so we did not kill them but put them in a hessian bag with some green stuff. After a few days we would have about a dozen rabbits in a couple of bags and as Austin Roach often called in on the job to check on the progress, he would gladly drop them off at home in

Durlacher Street. That way we had fun and also supplied the family with a welcome meat supply. All that they had to do was to kill them and clean them up ready for the fridge. I believe that Pieter next door was a willing bloke to oblige and catching up with Corry in the process.

In the kitchen/dining area there was the sink cupboard against the back wall under the window and on the left of that, there was a medium size kitchenette, which was always fully loaded with plates and cups and pots and pans in large quantities, and of course all the groceries that a family our size needed on a daily basis. In other words the cupboard was full so the green veggies were stored in a large crate on the floor between the kitchenette and the corner of the kitchen. On this particular Friday late afternoon, Theo and I arrived home from the bush, while the whole family was just sitting down for their evening meal around the long wooden dining table with the wooden benches. We had had a particularly good time with the rabbit trappings and we had 15 rabbits in three bags, which we carried into the kitchen/dining room. I made sure that the back fly door was locked and then we emptied all three bags of rabbits on the floor. The girls jumped off their seats and stood on top of them while the rabbits were running around like … well like rabbits. The whole situation was quite funny as it was so spontaneous. I remember that one of the rabbits was rather an unusual one because it was pinkish of colour and its leg was not broken like all the others. When we rounded up the rabbits and put them back in the bags for later attention, if you understand what I mean, we lost the pink rabbit somehow and we thought that perhaps it got away through the fly door. Ah well too bad, we still had 14 of them.

That weekend was a very enjoyable one with preparing the rabbits for the fridge and we often played cards around the kitchen table. Soon it was Monday morning and Austin Roach picked me up to take me to work at about 7 o'clock in the morning. Theo stayed behind because he had a dental appointment that day and would be taken to work the next day.

During the day Mum started to make preparations for the family meal and she put her hand in the large crate next to the kitchenette to get some veggies out and grabbed onto the live pink rabbit, that was happily hiding in the large amount of green stuff.

You should have heard Mum scream, Theo reported to me later. Just as well that Theo was still at home and soon the rabbit was caught and followed the same fate as all the others.

Dad had been corresponding with Mat and Kitty Iriks in South Australia and was informed they had moved to West Australia and had settled down in Medina, a place just east of the industrial area of Kwinana, south of Fremantle. They had realized the future in W.A. was a lot better for their ever increasing

family. That seemed to happen to all good Catholic families and they certainly were such a family. One of these days we would meet up again.

It was now about August 1953 and we had been in Geraldton nearly one year when some devastating news reached us from Holland. Mum and Dad, being such staunch Catholics, took the news very hard. Heer Oom had left the priesthood and was living with a woman in The Hague. I knew that he never really was interested in taking up a post as a parish priest and that he took every opportunity to avoid such a position when he came back from the Belgium Congo in Africa after the war. I think that he was so used to enjoying the freedom in Africa that he just could not live under strict rules in a parish situation. Had his mother been alive at this time she would have been shattered beyond belief. She was so proud that her son became a priest and then went to the missions in Africa

Dad was not happy at the Railways working as a storeman after a while and was searching for something else to do. I don't know where he got the idea from but he thought that he could make a go of selling kerosene door to door. In those days kerosene was used a lot in the household for heating and often on heaters to cook on, so it was a common commodity. He checked with the Shell Oil Company in Geraldton if he could buy kerosene in 44 gallon drums and yes he could.

Now Dad never had any problems with talking to people as he did nothing else in Holland with the Maasbode and when assisting with the setting up of the health scheme. He so badly wanted to have a go at this that he made up his mind to go ahead with it and handed in his notice at the Railways. In order to do this he needed some transport to carry the drums and after looking around he bought an old Oldsmobile utility that he thought would do the trick.

We soon made him two sets of cradles to support the drums in such a way, that the kerosene would flow out of it to completely empty the drum at the end. Now this Oldsmobile was an older type, which did not have a starter motor, so in order to start it you had to crank the starting handle at the front of the motor.

When Dad bought the bloody thing it started straight away and when Dad tried it himself too, it started no problem. Dad got himself some measuring cans and full of anticipation he was on his way being his own boss. Because I was always working in the bush, I never saw him in action during the week, but when I was home on the weekend, I was told how things were going and it seemed to be working. I don't think he was making as much as he was earning at the Railways but he was happy doing it and he was his own boss and could come home for lunch with Mum, who had her hands full looking after Anne.

Anne was now about 18 months old and getting into all sorts of mischief and needed watching constantly as there were no fences at the back and she could walk onto the street as there were no gates at the front. Even with the help of Corry being home full time, it still was a worry to Mum. With the three youngest boys around after school, Anne was soon joining them in doing all sorts of things they should not be doing and as boys would be boys, using this expression, things got out of hand. Our front verandah had a front dado, that is like a balustrade made up of vertical pine boards and pine boards have knots in them and sometimes these knots come out leaving a hole in the board. Now a hole in the wall at a lower level would seem very tempting to a young boy and soon it became a sport for them to piddle through it. As Anne was watching the exercise from her brother she wanted to do this too and of course it did not work for her.

Brother Bill was still at the Christian Brothers School but he was looking forward to doing what his brothers were doing as carpenters. The remaining six kids were attending school properly and seemed very settled in. We were nearing the end of the year and Dad was starting to get some trouble with the old Oldsmobile. She was running OK during the day but it was the early morning starting up that was becoming a problem. It took more than just a cranking of the handle in the morning to get the bloody thing started. This was a job just too exhausting for Dad to do in the morning, so John got himself an additional duty, to get the old wagon started, before he went off to work himself. If you have never cranked a motor to start then you would not know how hard it is after the first five or so cranks. It is very tiring and poor John found out quickly that it was no picnic. Then someone came up with the bright idea to drain the water out of the radiator, by opening the little drain tap at the bottom of it and after closing it, to fill the radiator up with boiling water from the top first thing in the morning. The proof of the pudding was that it was a lot easier in the morning, after the hot water treatment, to start the damn thing. This treatment was kept going until between Christmas and New Years Day, when we had a visit from Father Pieters.

We had not seen him for about five months so it was a very welcome surprise for him to turn up out of the blue. He stayed on for a few days, sleeping as before at the monastry, and we soon got talking about the reason that we came to Geraldton in the first place. He wanted to find out if Dad was still interested in pursuing the tomato growing possibility. I think that Dad had realized that it would be too hard a job for him and to ask the family to get involved with him and to actually uproot every one in their daily activities, would be too much to ask. He had lost his heart in it and I think that he was getting more and more interested in getting back to Perth. Before Father

Pieters went back to Perth, we had a serious family discussion about what we would do and at the end the outcome was……. Yes let's go back! It had been nice and it was a good experience living here in Geraldton, but there would be more and better opportunities in Perth for all of us. Dad asked Father Pieters if he could look out for accommodation big enough to suit our family and as usual he would do that. Over the two years now that we had known him, he proved to be a valuable friend, always ready to oblige, and he did again. Three weeks later he contacted Dad and said that the Catholic Church in Perth owned a large house on a big block in Joondanna Heights that they had bought for the purpose of building a church on it. However they would not do this for a while and they were prepared to rent the house to us on Father Pieters' recommendation.

We were very excited with the work he had done for us and we gladly accepted the offer by the Church and the rent was quite reasonable too. Apparently it was on the corner of Roberts Street and Osborne Street and we were told by Father Pieters that it had five bedrooms and a verandah all the way around which would make the house a lot cooler to live in. It would be available as from the first of February and that would be 1954. Everybody was excited at the prospect of the move back to Perth and we started to make arrangements.

It was obvious that the way we came to Geraldton was still the most economical way to move all our belongings and the whole family back to Perth. We still had the large 2M square wooden box, originally from Holland, intact with the wooden benches and the table in the middle. Dad decided that the old Oldsmobile would probably not survive the trip to Perth, so he got rid of it for just a few pounds. It did not take long to find some one with a tabletop truck to carry all of us back to Perth and as the house was available from the first day in February, we organized the truck for the first Monday of February. The driver was going to park the truck in front of the house on the Sunday morning allowing us to load most of it on the truck by night fall so that we could make an early start on Monday morning.

The weather was kind, not too hot, and as before, Mum with Bep was again in the front with Anne and the rest of the family in the box at the back. The relationship between Piet next door and Corry had been growing to the point that it was hard for both of them to say their goodbyes. Piet said to Corry, that he would follow us to Perth in the near future, after he was able to make arrangements with his Mum as Piet was the major bread winner of their family. You see Piet's Dad had left his family for another woman, leaving Piet's Mum to fend for herself, so you can understand that it would be a hard decision for Piet to leave his Mother without his support.

CHAPTER 7

PERTH

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What a pleasant surprise it was when the truck pulled up in front of the house in Roberts Street. It certainly was a hell of an improvement from Safety Bay and Geraldton! It had a long, wide passage in the centre with a lot of rooms on either side, a large dining area at the end of the passage and the kitchen alongside off it. What were very noticeable were the high ceilings, indicating, that it would be a lot cooler inside the house, something that Mum in particular appreciated.

We were getting used to shifting house and before nightfall the truck was completely empty and everything in its place inside the house. Again as before, a large lot of fish and chips did the trick as Father Pieters joined in with the meal. He was quick to point out that just in the next street, called Orchid Street, was the temporary Catholic Church. It was a corrugated iron structure, referred to as a Nissan hut, which was often used as an army structure. It was a cheap structure, but for now it would serve its purpose, until the new church would be built on the location where we were now living.

He introduced us to the parish priest that was there at that time. He was an Irish priest, short and stubby, by the name of Father Nolan with a heavy Irish accent but a very likable guy, and of course we were all there in full force on the next Sunday Mass.

Again it was time to find ourselves work and again with the help of Father Pieters, who seemed to have an unlimited list of contacts, I was steered into the direction of a company builder by the name of Berry Brothers along Scarborough Beach Road in Mt Hawthorn. They had their own joinery and cabinet shop, very well equipped with all sorts of machinery, and because they were very Catholic orientated people, they obviously did a lot of work connected to the church.

Amongst other things they did all the maintenance work at the Saint John of God hospital in Subiaco along Cambridge Street and when they took me on

as a carpenter, that is where they sent me to present myself to Tom Gallagher, the foreman on site. There appeared to be a lot of ongoing repair work to be carried out around and in the hospital and I became a member of four tradesmen directed to carry out any repair and replacement jobs around the hospital. The building was quite old so there was a lot of work around. At times I was sent to other places and I can remember that Berry Brothers was building a house in Harbourne Street in Wembley and this was where I was given an apprentice to help me in putting the roof on this house. Now this was not the first roof that I had constructed, as in Geraldton in the bush there I had, with the help of Theo, done quite a few roofs. Theo was also taken on by Berry Brothers and his apprenticeship was transferred from Austin Roach. For the first few months he worked in the joiner shop and later on he also spent time at the Saint John of God hospital. Unlike nowadays, apprentices served for a period of five years, to learn the trade in those days.

When John handed in his notice at the Geraldton Building Company with the explanation of our plans to go back to Perth, one of the company directors there said that they often worked together with Plunkets in Perth on country projects and as they were very happy with John's performance, he would gladly recommend John to Plunkets. So once we were settled in at home, John contacted them and was taken on straight away and put to work in the construction side of the business and he never looked back. Somehow Bep finished up in a fish and chip shop in Wellington Street Perth and worked there for about six months and thereafter she found work in an Edments store in Hay Street, also in Perth

As Corry had stayed at home with Mum in Geraldton, she continued to do the same thing in the Roberts Street house. After a couple of weeks, Dad thought of approaching the Railways in Perth to see if there was room for him as a storeman as he had about one year's experience in Geraldton with the Railways. As luck would have it, they were looking for someone with experience. He could start straight away. With the help of Father Pieters, Bill was offered an apprenticeship with Lilleymans who were located in Flinders Street just on the other side of Wanneroo Road. They were also builders with their own workshop and as they had a Dutchman working in the shop that was friendly with Father Pieters, that was how they managed to get Bill in there. His name was Bill van Herwaarden, a father of a large family as well. My Dad and Bill became good friends after a while.

Knowing that there was going to be a limit for us renting this large house in Roberts Street, we started to talk and look around for our own home. We naturally came to the conclusion, that with all the combined building experience we had in the family, we should buy a block of land and build our own



In hindsight I think I just kept her
in the back of my mind.

home to the size that would suit our family and we would design it ourselves. Then the next question came up: “Where to start looking?” It seemed logical for it to be not to far away from where we were living now, in fact it should be as close as possible to Roberts Street.

We found a vacant block, only four streets away from our street, off Wanneroo Road going a bit further out of Perth. It was named Grenville Street and the block was only two blocks back from the Wanneroo Road and it was a full quarter of an acre.

There was only one problem and that was a very big one. It had a giant of a tree on it with a trunk measuring about one meter diameter and we were told later, that it was a tuart tree. That tuart tree later on proved to be a very tough tree and I could see why nobody was interested up until now in this particular block. At the end we worked out that the location was ideal for us and if we could get the price down a bit, because of the tree, we would be interested in buying it.

We all were happy about it and we understood the work ahead in getting the tree down, so Dad and Mum signed up for the block and was able to pay cash for it from the money he had saved over the past year.

Father Pieters introduced Mum and Dad to Jeff and Mien Zoontjes, who were living in Leederville. They were very close to Father Pieters and Jeff made us aware that once a month Father Pieters was saying Mass at the Havelock Street Catholic church at 11 o’clock in the morning especially for the Dutch community.

Now Jeff Zoontjes worked with a wholesale butcher and he did a lot of delivering of meat carcasses to various butcher shops around Perth in a large enclosed refrigerated van. As he realized that we would like to attend this Dutch Sunday Mass in Havelock Street and knowing that none of us at that stage had any transport, he offered to pick all of us up in his “meat wagon” and afterwards bring us home again.

A very much appreciated offer which was gladly accepted. Of course the refrigeration was turned off for this trip. We were amazed at the attendance there was by all these Dutch people and through this we finished up meeting and getting to know a lot of them. Of course the other Sundays we went to our local church in the Nissan Hut down the road.

It was in about the month of May, three months after us returning to Perth, that Piet Heesters made his move to Perth. And of course he was anxious to continue his courtship with Corry after not seeing her for three months. With the influence of again Father Pieters, Piet moved in with the Zoontjes as a border. They had to make some arrangements for him in order to accommodate him. but as Piet was a carpenter in the making, it was no trouble at

all, and Corry was delighted with this change in their courtship. After settling in, Piet was able to get his apprenticeship reorganized with Plunkets Building Company as John was also already working there.

John and Bep sometimes went to the Dutch Club, which was upstairs in King Street, on a Saturday night for a dancing outing and I at times would go there as well with them. It was there that Bep met a Dutchman by the name of Harry Banken, who seemed a likable guy and he took an instant liking of Bep. It did not take long before Bep brought him home to introduce him to Mum and Dad and the rest of the family. What was remarkable was that he was also a carpenter, so he fitted in well with us, also being in the building trade.

Already on the Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, Riet Clynk and Bep had struck up a friendship while still on board, and when we were living in Safety Bay they still stayed in contact with each other. Then in September of 1952, about the same time as we were moving to Geraldton, they moved from North Beach to Gosnells, where her father had bought a block in Crandon Street.

Whilst still living in North Beach, he traveled during the weekends by bus with his eldest son John to Gosnells to build their very modest timber framed home. Now this man had suffered for many months with a terrible back pain and supported by any amount of pain killer tablets to keep going, he finished the job by September ready for the move with his family to Gosnells. The contact between the two girls stayed alive, while we were in Geraldton and after we settled back in Perth into Robert Street. Riet called in occasionally at our place and in return Bep traveled to Gosnells during the weekend.

There was no end of assistance that we received from Father Pieters and Mum and Dad were very grateful to him for that, so one day when the Father called in, as he often did, he asked if they could help him out with a situation he has got himself into and that was that his young nephew had arrived from Holland and the boy’s parents had asked if his uncle, Father Pieters, could look after him.

As Father Pieters was living in the Catholic Monastery next to the Church near Bulwer Street in North Perth, there was of course no place for him there. He wanted him placed in a good Catholic family and in his opinion there was no better family than the Oorschots for his nephew. So we got ourselves a border by the name of Theo Pieters. He quickly fitted into our family as everything was easy going and he turned out to be a likable fellow and in our age bracket.

Riet Clynk became a regular visitor at our place as Bep in turn called in at Riet’s place in Gosnells at times too. Although I was seeing Riet at regular times, I was a bit slow on the uptake.



Our house under construction with Harry, Dad, John, me and Theo all taking a break.

After about five months working for Berry Brothers and riding my push-bike everytime uphill in Green Street with my toolbox strapped on the back, I was getting tired of this energy sapping exercise, so I decided to buy myself a small motorbike. I looked around in some shops and selected a 125cc CZ model and then made a wooden ramp over the front steps of the verandah at home so that I could drive the motor bike onto the verandah to park it there at night for safety. That was quite an improvement for me going to work and not having to push my guts out in the morning.

Working for Berry Brothers, I met up with an uncle of the brothers, who was working a lot in the workshop and he was sometimes sent out to do the very special and precise jobs. His name was Uncle Arthur and he was a top tradesman. I suppose that due to my experience with making musical instruments, I became very finicky in whatever I tackled and no doubt it was noticed by Basil Berry, my immediate boss. Then one day they took Uncle Arthur and me to what was then the Commonwealth Bank Head office on the corner of Murray Street and Forrest place and we were shown the work we had to do. In the main hall we had to line the wall with first class jarrah wood paneling. Very precise work, it had to be spot-on. He was a real gentleman to work with and I got on very well and I also learnt a lot from him. Shortly thereafter we were both sent to do a job at Saint Mary's Cathedral in Perth.

You have probably paid a visit to the Cathedral sometime and if so, standing in the entrance you would have seen the layout of the Cathedral in the shape of a cross. Near the front where the raised main altar is, you can see a



Mum and Dad in front of the fireplace in the lounge.

short arm to the right in the design of the Cathedral. About five metres up they have constructed a sub floor, designed perhaps to accommodate a choir and behind them a smaller pipe organ as an alternative to the large organ high up at the back of the Cathedral over the main entrance. The job Uncle Arthur and I had to do was to construct the balustrading at the front edge of this subfloor and it all had to be done in high grade polished jarrah. When it was completed, it really looked fantastic and I felt proud of it, knowing, that the both of us had created something that would stand the test of time.

From here on we were spending a lot of weekend time on the block trying to get this bloody tree down. We were lucky that behind ours there was a vacant block with nothing on it accept a large tree stump where a tree had been cut down and on the right hand side of our block there was also a decent size stump and a small shed. On the left hand side was an average sized timber framed house, but there were no fences around our block at all and that was very lucky for us. This tree was leaning slightly to the left and backwards, so we had to work out a plan on how to get this tree down without any damage to the house next door. We could make use of both the tree stumps on the right and at the back, but we needed a lot of strong ropes to do it safely. Now that was where Dad came into it as he was working at the Railway stores in Perth and he was sure that he could borrow any amount of strong rope and pulleys and a chain saw to tackle the tree with. I think it was Harry, who had a car already at that time, who picked up all the gear from the Railways stores on a Friday afternoon when Dad was ready to knock off work. The people living at



49 Grenville Street Tuart Hill.

the left side of the block were very worried about us, being inexperienced tree loppers, to do something we had never done before. For us it was just a matter of using common sense and not going off half cocked.

The first thing we needed to do was secure a strong line from about half-way up the tree to the solid stump in the ground on the block at the right of us. After we secured a strong sling of steel wire rope around the tree about halfway up and the same at the stump next door, we then hooked a two wheel pulley at the top sling and a three wheel pulley at the bottom sling. We then tied the rope at the eye of the top pulley, then fed the rope through the bottom one and then through the top one again and back to the bottom one and once more through the top pulley and then down back to the bottom pulley. By using this method and now pulling with a couple of us at this rope coming from the bottom pulley, we put a lot of tension on this combination of ropes making this anchor of lines very tight and very strong because it was a set of five ropes together. All we had to do was secure this pulling rope to the bottom sling and we did prevent the tree eventually falling on the house next door.

We used the same method from the top sling to the heavy stump on the block behind ours. We had a strong pulling force to pull the tree backwards as we worked at digging and cutting the root system of the tree. The people in the house next door seemed to be a lot happier but still could not wait for it all to be over. It took two full weekends to dig and cut around the base of the tree with the help of Harry and Piet as well and during this procedure Dad was worried as hell, but at the end of the second weekend, as we were cutting and at

the same time pulling and tightening the line at the back, it was a spectacular moment to see the tree topple backwards as we had planned for it to happen.

The whole neighbourhood was watching this and when the end result was what we had worked so hard for, they gave us a well earned applause. Everybody around was relieved that it all worked out OK. Now that the tree was down, we had the gigantic task of cutting up this monster and that was when we found out how hard the wood was. Apparently we were told that butcher blocks were made of slices of the tuart tree trunk because if you would hit the flat of the slice with an axe it would not penetrate it but would bounce away from it. It took a long time to cut the tree up in pieces with a lot being put on a heap to burn in order to get rid of it and the large trunk with all the roots took a long time to burn in its place.

From Wanneroo Road, driving into Grenville Street, our street ran down-hill. Standing in the street looking at our block, over the full width, there was a fall of more than one meter to the left requiring a garage to be constructed under the main floor level to the left side of the house. In the meantime the design of the home was completed with a large front verandah and a T- shaped passage leading from the front door. On the left was Mum and Dad's bedroom, on the right the lounge, at the left end of the passage over the garage another bedroom with two more adjoining bedrooms. Along the passage was located the bathroom area with compartments, having separate partitions 2 metres high, containing a shower, a bath with shower over and a separate toilet and hand basin against the laundry wall with mirror over.

Next to that was the laundry with the hot water system and troughs, accessible from the full width back verandah. At the left end of this verandah we planned a small separate bedroom with a sloping ceiling and then on the complete right hand side of the house was the most important part of the house, for the full depth of it, and that was the kitchen with the large slow combustion stove that had a heating element in the wood fire box connected to the hot water tank and the large dining area combined with the kitchen. This is where the family was fed on a daily basis. That was the design of our family home.

After discussions with different friends, Dad was advised to approach the MLC Insurance Company for finance as he had to borrow the money to build our house. At the same time Dad would take out a life insurance policy with them on his life, assuring that if during the life of this mortgage he would untimely pass away, the Insurance Company would pay out the remainder of the mortgage making the house freehold for the survivor, being Mum. This seemed the way to go so Mum and Dad agreed to this and signed all the neces-sary papers for this important step in their lives. It was first time ever that they

had committed themselves to a mortgage in their lives, so it was an eventful thing.

It was only a couple of months after that Piet settled in Perth with the Zoontjes family that he also bought himself a CZ 125cc motorbike like mine. He took Corry riding on the back of it as if she had been doing this for years. He had a pillion seat fitted to his bike when he bought it and I drove around on mine without one as I never thought of having one put on when I bought it in the first place. So on the rare occasion that I had someone to take along on the back of my motorbike, I had to put a cushion on the rear mudguard, for the passenger to sit on. This solution was not very exciting really, as I found out later.

It was at the start of the Christmas holidays at the end of 1954 that we commenced building Mum and Dad's home, realizing that we could get a lot done before the end of the holidays. In hindsight it seamed crazy to dig out the earth for the below ground garage on the left by hand, but the labour from all the boys in the family and boy friends came cheap so it was just done that way. After digging out for the concrete footings for the garage walls, we mixed the concrete on site from the big heaps of blue metal, yellow sand and bags of cement, all deposited at the front of the block. The bricks that were selected for the garage walls and the brick foundation for the house were a red type of clinker brick with black burns on them. They looked quite impressive and we figured that they would look good in the wall. The size of the garage would be big enough to accommodate a single car plus additional space for storage and shelving on the side wall.

So after bricking up the walls of the garage, we constructed the form work for the concrete slab to be poured over the top and again mixing the concrete on site and placing the reinforcing mesh in place, we soon had the concrete in position. After backfilling behind the walls and compacting at the same time we were able to dig out the rest of the footings for the house and fill them in with concrete as before. By the time that the holidays were over we had nearly finished all of the brick work except near the left side front where the retaining wall had to be done and brick steps leading from the garage to the front of the house.

We went back to our normal daily work activities and at nights straight after dinner I went back to carry on with the brick work and as we had a clear night with a full moon to work with, I kept on going until Mum came over to tell me that it was about time for me to give it away, almost crying her eyes out. All that was left now to build were the brick piers internally throughout to carry the 4 inch X 3 inch bearers and the 4 inch x 2 inch joists. The week following this, all the timber was delivered and with the use of the electricity



The whole Oorschot Family in September 1955. From the left standing: Corry, Bill, Riet, Henk, Cisca, John, Jan, Theo, Bep. sitting: Dad, Anne, Mum. In front: Bert, Hans, Frank.

from our left hand neighbour and our Black and Decker saw, we made a start at cutting out and nailing the floor and wall framing. No nail guns in those days however. The door and window frames had been ordered before from Lilleymans, where Bill was working and there was just no stopping us.

Every weekend there was a beehive of activity in the Granville Street with the plumber and the electrician working hand and hand with us as we progressed. Soon Brisbane and Wunderlich were putting their terra cotta mottled red tiles on the roof and all this time we never lost an hour because of rain. How lucky we were! Next we covered all the walls on the outside with Hardy's asbestos sheeting finished off with architraves around the door frames and windows and asbestos covers over the joints.

Amongst the Dutch people that we met, there was a bricklayer by the name of Henny Veenvliet. He lived a bit further out in Tuart Hill and he undertook to build us an open fire place in the lounge. A friend of Dad offered to paint a typical Dutch scenery on two, terra cotta 9 inch square smooth bricks, depicting a Dutch windmill with surrounding landscaping finished in a high gloss, making it looking like "Delfts Blauw". He made an excellent job of

it and Mum and Dad were very happy with the end result as it was just a little bit of Holland that he had created. This sort of scenery was typical of the area where Mum and Dad grew up just south of Rotterdam near what they would call the “Kinderdijk”. These special bricks were bricked in on either side of the opening of the open fire place and when it was finished it really made the fire place look like a masterpiece.

I have a photo of Mum and Dad sitting on either side of the fire place in the lounge when the house was finished and we had moved in. With the house fully covered we were now ready to put the jarrah flooring down and then the Brady plasterboard contractors moved in to cover up all the walls and made it really look like home already. The inside of the bathroom walls were covered with water proof hardboard to be painted at a later date. The front and back verandah were also covered with jarrah flooring boards and now all that was left was for the window sashes and doors to be fitted and architraves and skirting boards to be nailed in place and the plumbers and the electricians to complete their part. Dad and the boys did the painting before we were ready to move in and at the same time we did the concrete drive to the below level garage and the drive from the road along the right hand side of the house. Number 49 Grenville Street was ready to move into and that is what we did.

The next thing that was needed was the picket fences all around, but there was no hurry for that and we completed them at a slower pace when we were living there. The large wooden box from Holland found a place in the back yard and came in handy again for storage. Mum and Dad were very thankful for the help offered by, in particular the future in-laws, and of course the rest of the family in building the family home.

As a point of interest I recently (in the year 2011) went to have a look at 49 Granville Street for the purpose of making a photo for my book but I was so disappointed at the state of neglect that I decided not to make one for my book. However from one family member I received a photo of the finished house at that time and here it is:

Through Bill van Herwaarden and his family and Father Pieters, we started to meet a number of Dutch families in the area. One of them was a young married couple with three kids. Their names were Henk and Herma Werven. Henk was working as a labourer at the Emu Brewery in Spring Street just off Mounts Bay Road. I took a liking to him and as time went along we became good friends. Another family that we came across was the Verschuren family. When they emigrated to West Australia, they moved into a migration camp near Northam and from thereon they ended up living in Goomalling some 40 km North East of Northam. They were a family of eight girls and I think two boys. Of course a good Catholic family and really nice people to meet.



Me on my CZ motorbike coming back from Geraldton.

As time went on we kept catching up with them and slowly I started to get interested in one of the older girls. Riekie was her name, a tall and slender person and easy to talk to. A couple of weeks later, on a Saturday morning, I went to visit the Verschuren family in Goomalling on my CZ motorbike. Riekie's father and one of the sons, Sjaak (Jack), were working at the Agricultural College outside Northam maintaining farm machinery and any other work that was needed. As a result of this they had a decent work shop at home which was interesting to me as I was a bit inclined that way too.

I took Riekie on the back of my motor bike (no pillion seat) on a cushion on the mudguard and I think that she was not impressed with my means of transport that I had to offer. I made a number of trips to Goomalling to see Riekie and I was really starting to like her, but as times went on and Riekie made some return visits to our place in the Grenville Street, we sort of started to drift apart. What did not help was that my brother John had bought a car, a very nice looking and comfortable Humber and I think that Riekie felt a lot more at ease in John's Humber than on the back of my mudguard covered with a cushion. In hindsight I could not really blame her.

At this stage I was still working for Berry Brothers and doing some work at the Rosemount picture theatre in Leederville. I was working there with two other carpenters, re-constructing a new curved dome ceiling in timber

ready to be lined with plasterboard by other people. The whole theater was full of scaffolding right up to the ceiling level for us to work on. Then one day, old Mr. Cyril Berry called in to see how we were getting on with the job and we were informed by him that they had won the tender to build the Gothic Catholic Church in the grounds of the Saint John of God hospital in Subiaco. Tom Gallagher the foreman, under whom I had worked a lot at the hospital, was going to be in charge and I was instructed to start on this project under him from the very beginning, being involved with the setting out as well. I was excited with this news, and when I looked at the plans with Tom, I found it was going to be quite an interesting structure. I had never worked on a new building this size before, so you can understand that I was impressed.

After the grounds were cleared from trees, paths and grass, we were able to put all the setting out hurdles in place and then Tom and I did the complete setting out of the church. They had a couple of Italian grano workers and labourers doing the digging out for the footings and steel fixers putting in the reinforcements before the Ready mix concrete went in, all in readiness for the bricklayers to start. While that was going on I was given the job of constructing the flying buttresses.

I shall explain what they are. Just imagine for a moment that I take you into a Gothic Church and you will see that the main centre section is supported on massive brick or stone columns on either side and at the top they are connected to each other by massive arches built out of brick or stone. From these columns outwards to the outside walls, they would mount the flying buttresses. They would take the shape of about half an arch and they would be constructed of reinforced concrete. I was given a nearby large room with a wooden floor, on which I marked out exactly, from the engineering drawings, the correct shape of the flying buttress. When I had finished marking the full size shape of the flying buttress on the floor, Tom came over to check it with me and then he gave me the OK to make two timber moulds out of 19mm waterproof formwork plywood. It would have a solid base of plywood on timber joists and the arch shaped walls of the mould would be constructed with narrow jarrah floor boards secured to the arch shaped joists on either side of the mould.

All the securing to the joists had to be done with screws, because the nails would work themselves loose by repeat usage of the moulds and the vibration when pouring the concrete in the mould. I had to cast a total of 10 flying buttresses so each mould was going to be used five times. The whole lot was to be bolted together in order to make it easy to take apart and the arched walls needed to be bolted to the wooden floor. When completed we had to make a couple of spreaders over the top to keep the top edge in place when pouring

and vibrating the concrete. The last thing that needed to be done was to paint the individual sections with tree coats of formwork paint and also in order to secure two lifting hooks to the top side of the arch, two 21mm holes had to be drilled to take the 19mm bolts prior to pouring the concrete.

As soon as the first mould was finished, the reinforcing contractors came out to measure up the steel for all the ten flying buttresses in readiness for the fixing and placing of the reinforcement in the moulds when required. I was given a spot away from all the building activity but still accessible for the concrete truck to get to and I started setting up the first mould in preparation for the first pour. When the first flying buttress was poured, it was covered over with a tarpaulin for seven days so that the concrete would cure while left undisturbed. The concrete would over seven days of curing gain about 85% of its ultimate strength. While this process was taking place I would be working on the second one. This way I was able to work continually on manufacturing these flying buttresses.

I felt all excited for my contribution to this Gothic Catholic Church at Saint John of God's hospital in Subiaco. However I only recently found out that before the turn of the century, this beautiful church was pulled down. It was built mainly for the use of the many nuns who were working at the hospital at that time and their number had dwindled over the years dramatically, also they were running out of space for the ever increasing size of the hospital.

While all this was going on in Subiaco, at home, shortly after we moved in at the Granville Street home, on one evening we got visitors. Two gentlemen from the church finance committee came to discuss with Mum and Dad the planned giving system that was in place in this parish and they felt that they had the duty to make us aware of it and to inform us of how it worked. They wanted to find out which of our family members were working and were earning a wage and they said that it was customary that each and everyone of those that were earning, should contribute 10% of that to the church on Sunday during Mass. In order to do this we would be given a small brown envelope at the door when leaving the church and then the next Sunday that envelope, with the money in it, had to be deposited in the bowl at the door upon entering the church.

Well that sparked a hell of a discussion amongst all of us after these two fellows left and the end result was that we would just put into these little envelopes what we were prepared to put into it and it was NOT going to be the 10% they were suggesting that we should put in. We were also told to put our name on the envelope before putting it in the bowl. A number of weeks went by and we heard no reaction at all from anybody from the church committee, until some two months later, on one Sunday morning, and I never forgot this.

Father Nolan at the start of his usual sermon from the rostrum, which was serving as his make shift pulpit, stood looking into the assembled congregation not saying a word for at least ten seconds, in doing so getting everyone's attention.

He then said very loud: " Two weeks ago we handed out 152 little brown envelopes, last week we only received 97 of them back", and while hitting the rostrum with his hand with full force, he yelled: "where are the other 55"? It was very silent as he stood there looking into all the shocked faces and after another ten seconds he turned around and proceeded with the Mass without the usual sermon. He obviously thought that we had not deserved a sermon from him.

This incident was talked about for some time amongst the parishioners and I can assure you that it did not make Father Nolan very popular. Dad was not impressed either.

Talking about Dad, earlier on when the tree was taken down before starting to build the house, Dad had failed to return the borrowed ropes and the other equipment to the Railways store and at the end they took it as if he had stolen them so he ended up losing his job over it. Lucky for him he got a position with Metters in Subiaco as a co-driver, delivering stoves and other goods all around the metropolitan area and of course the ropes and the rest were duly taken back to the Railways.

After the completion of the family home I started to think about my original intention in Holland to go to university to study for a civil engineering degree. As you well know, as I explained before about the impossibility for me to study any further because of finances. So I became interested to find out if I could as yet follow that path here in Perth. It was one of the reasons that we came back to Perth from Geraldton. So one afternoon after work I went to the Technical College in St. Georges Terrace almost opposite King Street and after making inquiries about what I was interested in, I was told that by following night classes over a number of years I could get my civil engineering degree. So I there and then enrolled and paid the initial fees and the following week I went to night school by bus.

I went twice a week and as the bus travelled along Wanneroo Road, it was easy for me to go that way to Perth. I remember one evening on the way home, I must have fallen asleep in the back of the bus. When the bus came to the end of his route, way past the Grenville Street and the bus was completely empty, the driver noticed me still sitting there. Because I had become a regular passenger on this route, he offered to wake me up the next time and as he was going back the same way back to Perth, he dropped me off near home that night. After about five months I found out that for me to qualify for my

degree eventually, I had to put in a minimum of two years full time study. I can not understand why I was not informed about this requirement in the first place. That was very disappointing to me and as I could not possibly afford not to work for two years, I decided to forget about the civil engineering course altogether. Shit.

Harry and Bep took their relationship very seriously and eventually they announced that wanted to get married and so they set a date to coincide with Mum's birthday on the 7th of January of 1956. As Father Pieters remained an important person in our family, it was naturally him, who was asked to be the celebrant and of course he accepted with the utmost of pleasure. As Father Pieters official place of residence was the monastery next to the large Catholic Church near Bulwer Street in Highgate, the Nuptial Mass would take place there in the church were he would feel as if it was his church where he belonged and then afterwards the reception would be at the family home in the Granville Street.

It was a very proud moment for Mum and Dad for the first one of their children was going to be married and she had reached the destination of becoming independent. They had bought a block of land in Holmes Street in Shelley near Riverton and already built a shed at the back of the block to move into when they were married and to be able to build their home when living on the block.

The party on the wedding day at home was a very joyous affair with many friends and family there to celebrate their start of a new life together. As Harry had no family here in West Australia, he had some really close friends present on this so important day for him and one of them was the Vermeulen family who were living further along in Tuart Hill. Harry was a border with them and they really treated him like a son as they also had a boy of about Harry's age who had become one of Harry's best mates. His name was Bert Vermeulen known as Bep Vermeulen.

He was always in for a good joke and he surely provided a good one on their wedding day. It was the custom on occasions like these that some of the guests would bring a plate with food or some finger food and Bep Vermeulen brought a plate with some very nice looking chocolate truffles along and put it amongst all the other very attractive looking plates on the table. Nobody knew that in about half a dozen of them, he had hidden a nipple of a pig's tit in it and of course if you were unlucky enough to pick that one you would be found chewing like mad until you took it out of your mouth to discover what you were chewing on. It caused quite a laugh for the others when it was discovered what was in the truffles.

All in all it was a memorable day for the family and the newlyweds and then they were off on their way to their own place, to spend the first night together not knowing that someone had created some surprises in their sleeping quarters in their temporary accommodation in Shelley.

Shortly after the wedding, Piet Heesters expressed the desire that he wanted to check out how his mother was coping without his support as his father Tony had moved out permanently quite some time before, so he asked if I was interested to come along with him on my motorbike. We decided that the next long weekend, which was in March, would be the time to do it so on the Saturday morning early we started off on our way to Geraldton.

It was a pleasant trip and as I wanted to see if there were any changes in Geraldton, I discovered that there were none to speak off. Nothing had really changed and I was not surprised. Piet's mother was coping all right doing a lot of parttime work in cleaning schools and houses and seemed quite happy. She of course was very happy to see Piet after all this time and she appreciated me coming along with Piet on the trip. Then Piet mentioned to his Mum that he was planning his wedding to Corry in the middle of the year and wanted to find out if she would be attending the wedding in Perth. She said that she would not miss it for the world. Happy with that knowledge, we drove back to Perth on the Monday and I don't know if you ever have been on a motorbike when there is another one driving alongside of you at the same time? That constant drumming sound in your ears really gets to you and as I am a good one for falling asleep any time when I am relaxed, I was exactly doing that.

On a long and deserted road half way to Perth, according to Piet, I left the road on the left hand side and continued on the verge for about 100 metres and then came back onto the road without waking up at all. My subconscious state of mind must have taken over automatically and to Piet it was really funny to see this happening. During my life this sleeping phenomenon has happened time and time again and never, ever anything happened at all except once some years later. When the time comes I will tell you about it, I promise.

Upon our return from Geraldton Piet and Corry announced that they were ready to get married and were looking at a date of the 30th June 1956, just about six months after Bep and Harry got married. The same arrangements were made as the previous one and everybody was happy with that.

In the mean time I was still working for Berry Brothers at the Gothic Church at the hospital grounds and we were flat out now, constructing the roof over the main section and the flying buttress section. There was a lot involved and it was very interesting as it was so different from a roof over a house. My mind goes back to the Saint Catherine Church in Eindhoven in Holland when I, as a choir boy, had access to the stairs leading to the choir area

at the back of the church and the stairs also led to the area above the ceiling space and under the roof cover of the church. The whole ceiling construction in this church, which was very old, was all in solid brick and therefore very massive. Compared with this new way of timber construction with a plaster board ceiling it was certainly a lot simpler.

It was about the middle of May, six weeks before Corry and Piet's wedding that Piet got some bad news. He had just finished his apprenticeship with Plunkets and they had a policy that once you had finished your apprenticeship, you had to leave the firm. Their reason for this stance was that although you now became a tradesman, your workmates still see you as an apprentice and that would not be fair to the new tradesman. What a blow to Piet and Corry so close before their wedding. Fortunately for him he was able to find another job with a different builder almost straight away. Leading up to his wedding he had found a place to move into after the wedding, but it was sort of a shed in someone's back yard that needed doing up to make it somewhat livable for them once they got married.

Now I am going back to Berry Brothers and the Church being built and nearing completion at the Saint John of God hospital grounds in Subiaco. The roof construction was just about finished ready to take the roof covering, when Tom the foreman, told me that my job with Berry Brothers was going to run out shortly. Then it was on the next pay day, that I was given a weeks notice. This was about the middle of June. Mr. Cyril Berry said that he was sorry to let me go but at the moment there was not enough work around, in fact the whole building industry was having a hard time and I had heard of more people losing their jobs. Theo was also given notice but because he was still an apprentice, he was placed with the Public Works Department (P.W.D.) in order to complete his apprenticeship.

I tried to find work but it did not look promising at all and then I noticed that in the Sunday Times there was an opportunity to win 1000 pounds by filling in a crossword puzzle and sending in the puzzle coupon. If filled in correctly, you would go into the draw to win this prize. The more entries you put in the bigger the chance of winning.

At the same time that I was trying my luck at the Sunday Times puzzle stunt, Corry and Piet got married on the 30th of June. As before with Harry and Bep, they also got married in the large Church near Bulwer Street and again Father Pieters performed the wedding ceremony. They looked so happy, knowing that life would be different for them from here on.

The reception afterwards was again at the family home at the Grenville Street. Both Piet's Mum and Dad had come to Perth from Geraldton and Mount Magnet for the wedding which was very much appreciated by Piet.

While Tony Heesters was here, he mentioned to Piet that if he ever needed a job, knowing that it was a bit hard in the building industry in Perth, there was plenty of work available at the Hill 50 gold mine in Mount Magnet. It was good to know that, just in case.

Getting back to the Sunday Times, for the next six weeks I bought 10 papers on a Sunday and spent all day filling in this crossword puzzle. Now I found out soon that there were various solutions to completing these puzzles and the winner would be announced in the following week's issue of the paper.

After a while I got fed up and frustrated with this method of earning money and I eventually gave it away not having made any money at all through the Sunday Times. I got the feeling that the whole thing was just a stunt to sell more papers on a Sunday.

By about the first week of August Piet was made redundant with the builder that he started with nearly three months before and he immediately contacted his Dad in Mount Magnet. Within 24 hours he got the message back that he could start there straight away and when he told me about it I asked if he could find out if I could be accepted there as well.

Already the next day the answer was: "Yes come over, you can start here too".

CHAPTER 8

HILL 50 MOUNT MAGNET

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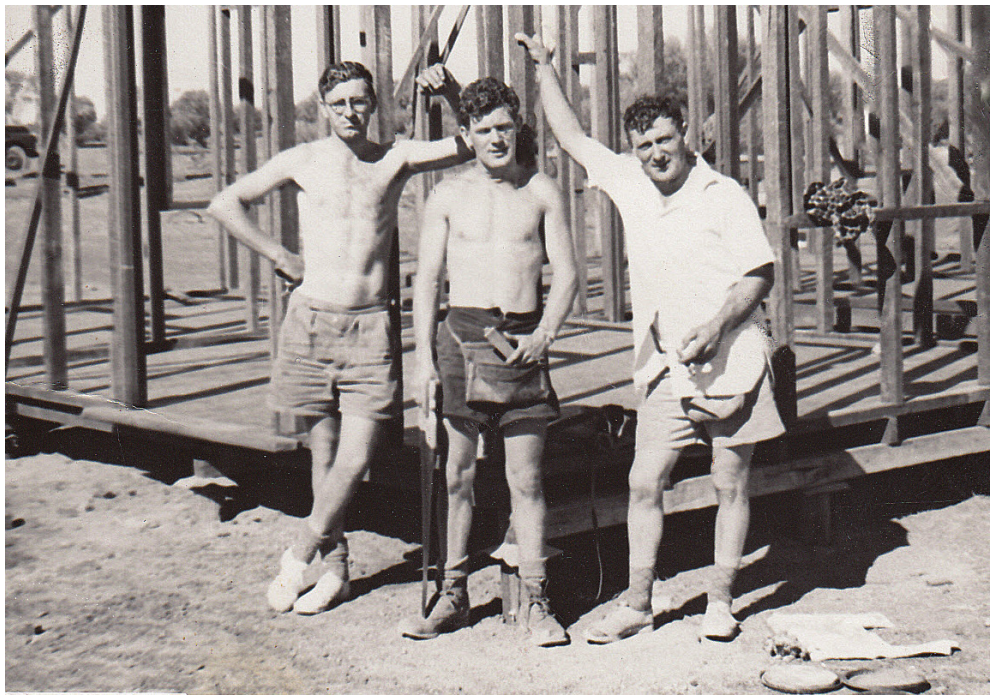
One week after Piet losing his job, on the Saturday in the second week of August at about 4 o'clock in the morning Piet and I took off on our motorbikes on our way to Mount Magnet. We both had saddle bags over the back wheel of the bike loaded up with the basics of carpentry tools, all the clothes we could pack and I took my 22 Lithgow riffle and bullets along as well, as some cans of campie and drinks for the trip up North. Corry was going by bus to Geraldton and then by train through to Mount Magnet. She would be taking with her some suitcases and a box with other essentials. We were only about one hour on the road when it started to rain. As it was August we expected to get some rain so we were well prepared with raincoats and we just took it easy as the roads would become slippery. Every two hours we took a break to check our loads and had something to eat at the same time. As the rain just did not stop, although it was not heavy, we looked for some shelter at the times we stopped.

We eventually got to Wubin which is about halfway to Mount Magnet. We had done all right so far but after we left Wubin, we found out that the bitumen road that we had been on so far, had suddenly changed to gravel. On the bitumen we were doing about 80 to 90 km an hour but on the gravel with the corrugations we were lucky to do about 30 km an hour. What made it worse was that at some stretches a grader had been over it turning the gravel into a mud road. We were sitting on our seats with our legs out wide to help balance ourselves and preventing from falling over as we slid trough this bloody mud. Just as well we had our heavy work boots on. It was something that I will never forget and amazingly I did not fall asleep at all. The motorbikes seemed to lose power while we were struggling through this mud, so we stopped to find out what was happening and we soon found out that the clay mud was starting to build up between the front tire and the mudguard creating a hard clay brake shoe. We had no alternative but to claw this hard clay out with a screw driver,

before we could continue on, and it was still raining as we plodded along. According to signs on the side of the road we knew that we were approaching Mount Magnet and then about 11 o'clock at night, when we drove over a hill, we saw the lights of Mount Magnet in front of us. Boy what a relieve that was!

With directions given to Piet by his father before we left, we had no trouble finding his place. We were totally soaked to the bone and bitterly cold as you can well imagine but after a hot shower and some dry clothes followed by some food, we were ready for some well deserved sleep. The bacon and eggs breakfast in the morning went down like, well, like bacon and eggs always does and then we had a good look at the state of our motorbikes. First of all they needed a good clean up and as it was dry that morning it was a lot more pleasant to tackle the cleaning of them. Upon close inspection of the chain and the sprockets that carry the chain, we noticed that the sprockets were all built up with brown clay and the heat of the friction had glazed the clay rock hard. After taking the chain of the bike, we had to use a round file to clear the baked clay out of the sprockets. What a job that was and then we came to the conclusion that both the chains had stretched to the point that the chain was not sitting properly around the sprocket. You could drive the motorbike but you had to take it easy because of the play of the chain around the sprocket. We had to order two new chains immediately so that we could keep on driving our motorbikes.

The next day was Monday and we went with Tony to the Hill 50 gold mine, which was about 3 km out from Mount Magnet town. Tony introduced us to Gerry Isseger, the foreman in charge of all the building activity. He was a Dutchman and lived in a cottage inside the mine grounds with his wife and family and we took an instant liking to him. He showed us around the mine explaining where everything was, including the well equipped workshop for us to use whenever needed. Near the entrance to the mine was a small office where Gerry explained that there was a permanent guard located with a riffle and his duty was to guard a door opposite where he was stationed. This door led into the assay office where the gold bars were stacked after they were poured at the end of the production process. Entrance through this door was strictly forbidden for obvious security reasons. In the middle of the grounds was the massive structure of the derricks. This was a tall steel structure located directly over the shaft leading into the underground of the mine. Down this shaft, by means of a large cage on a thick steel rope, workers were lowered down into the lower area of the mine to the various levels of work. It all looked very impressive and interesting particularly if you have never seen anything like this before. After a short tour of the mine, Gerry took Piet and me into his office in order to fill in the necessary paper work relating to our employment



Myself, Piet and his father Tony in front of a house we were building over the weekends in Mount Magnet.

and he explained the working hours which were from 7:30 am till 4:30 pm, five days a week with ½ hour for lunch and 15 minutes for morning and afternoon tea. He showed us the time clocking-in machine near the main office and mentioned to us that if we were interested to do any additional work after hours or the weekend, just to let him know.

Now the activity around the mine was divided into many sections, each with a person in charge of that department. Just to name a few, there was someone in charge of all the electrical works, someone for the under ground activity and someone else for the large boiler shed and the rock crushing machinery. There was also a head surveyor, because all the underground excavations and tunneling was plotted on plans for future reference. Now all these heads of the various departments had to live on the mine site and therefore be readily available in case of emergency. Therefore all around, there were quite a few houses for these men and their families and as to be expected, they were all timber houses and they needed a fair amount of maintenance done at regular intervals and that is where it came in handy for us to be around. So for the first couple of weeks we made and replaced fly wire doors, window sashes, internal doors, installed shelves in kitchens, in fact when we got to someone's house to do some work, they kept on finding more things to be done while we were at it. In the process we started to make a lot of friends.

About 300 metres outside of the mining grounds along the road between Mount Magnet and the mine site, there was a large house with many bedrooms that was used as a boarding house. It was of course a timber building with a verandah all around and as there was not much room at Tony's house in Mount Magnet, I moved into the boarding house straight away. I was given a room 12 foot square to share with another bloke and the meals were pretty good also. Now my room was not far from the large kitchen and as you can imagine, there was a large industrial fridge in the kitchen with the compressor motor out on the verandah not far from my bedroom window. This thing started and stopped all night and it was hard to sleep with this continuous noise, but after a week I got used to it and somehow my subconscious mind blocked out this noise and I was able to sleep as normal. A couple of days after Piet and I arrived in Mount Magnet, Corry arrived with all the luggage and they moved in with Tony and his lady friend. I think her name was Coby. This was of course a happy moment for them to be together again as they had only been married for a few months now and it was hard for them to be apart for any length of time. Through the management of the mine they were able to secure a rental home quickly in town and then they were able to enjoy the privacy that they were entitled to as a young married couple.

It did not take long for us to pick up extra work to fill in the weekends and the hours beyond the eight hours we worked for the mine. With Tony included, we undertook to build a timber frame house in the town, doing this on the weekend days and then inside the mine grounds we contracted to build another timber frame house using all materials belonging to the mine. This house we worked on from daylight in the morning until 7am and straight after work in the afternoon until dark in the evening, five days a week. On top of that Piet and I started to make simple wardrobes for the people who owned the boarding house where I was living. There were ten bedrooms in that house and they were occupied by men working on the gold mine. Most of them were young single people with their clothes in suitcases on the floor making it all an untidy mess in the rooms and so much harder for them to keep the rooms clean. So I suggested to the lady at the boarding house, would they like it if Piet and I made them some simple wardrobes out of jarrah framing and hardboard sheeting with half shelves and half hanging space. We agreed on a price and at night after dinner we embarked on making these wardrobes in the workshop at the mine after getting permission from Gerry to do so. So as you can see we were geared up to think of nothing else than making money during every available hour of the day, while all the other young people working on the mine were hanging around in the pub in town getting pissed from their earnings. Once every 14 days, on a Saturday night, there was a dance on at the

hall in the town and Corry, Piet and I went there on most occasions just for a break from the continuous amount of work we were doing and this break was well enjoyed by us.

There is one detail that is worth mentioning here and that is to do with the stumps of the house at the mine site where we worked in the early hours and late afternoons. Now in Perth when working on timber houses we always used 4 inch X 4 inch jarrah stumps but on the house at the mine site we were told to use round post of jam wood that was used at the mine as fire wood for the boilers to create steam for the steam engines. What was so remarkable was that you just could not cut it with a hand saw or even with a Black and Decker power saw. It was extremely hard and what we had to do, was measure the length of it from the sole plate in the ground to the string line above it and then take a lump of fire wood to the special big power docker saw near the fire wood heap and cut it there and when cutting the wood the sparks would be flying off it. The only way to fasten the bearers to the these stumps was by drilling vertically through the bearer and the ant cap into the stump and driving a six inch nail all the way through it into the stump.

One morning Gerry came to me and said that at the 1040 foot level underground, I had to construct a concrete base required to take a large electric water pump and he gave me the measurements. I had to make the formwork in the workshop ready to be assembled underground with the holding down bolts complete and the reinforcement precut to size for the whole lot to be transported down the shaft to the location at the 1040 foot level. So when it was ready, down I went with my miner's helmet on my head with the light on the front off it and the batteries on my arse. It was the first time that I had gone down the mine shaft in my life and I can tell you it was quite an experience. Dropping down disappearing into darkness was something else. But you know it was part of the job if you were working on a mine site and I very much enjoyed it. When I had finished installing the formwork for the concrete base with the reinforcements in place on small concrete blocks, I was asked to stay with the pouring of the concrete. I had to supervise the Italian gang of grano workers and watch the formwork standing up to the pressure of the concrete vibrator as they poured the concrete.

As I might have mentioned before that in the process of working around the mine and meeting up with the various people in charge of their departments, we met up with the chief surveyor by the name of Harry Sainsbury and he invited both Piet and me to come along on a discovery trip underground to finish eventually at the 1200 foot level. So on a Saturday morning down we went all strapped up with the miners gear on us and we first went down the shaft to the 1040 foot level. That was very simple, but then we walked

along one of the tunnels to a spot where they previously had drilled a hole of about three foot diameter (900 mm) to a level of about 1200 foot below ground level. Above this hole there was a tripod secured to the rock floor with a pulley underneath the top of the tripod and a thin cable through the pulley connected to a small electric winch and at the end of the cable there was a metal bucket attached; the size of about a 20 liter drum. This bucket was called a kibble. As we went down the mine shaft that morning another man came along with us and he was going to be the bloke who would be operating the winch for us. Harry, the head surveyor, made sure that we had solid working boots on and also sturdy working gloves with us.

When we arrived at the hole in the ground he explained what we were to expect from here on. The way to go down the hole was to put one foot in the kibble and put one gloved hand around the steel cable and then as you were slowly lowered down the hole, you kept the other foot against the side of the hole and the other free hand touching the side of the hole as well. Of course you kept the light switched on at your helmet and just not panic to as you were slowly lowered. From the top of the tripod there was a rope hanging down with a bell attached to it. It would be used to signal to the bloke at the winch when to operate the winch whenever you were ready to be winched up again. So Harry was going to go down first and it was interesting to see him just disappearing into this hole. I was next and then Piet followed.

It was quite an experience sinking down into the darkness and feeling the utter silence around you. When we were down at the 1200 feet level and standing beside each other, Harry asked us to turn off the light on the helmets and we were engulfed in a total darkness around us, so intense it was just so amazing, eerie really. We just stood there taking it all in and then Harry turned on his large torch that he brought along and what we saw was just fantastic. There was a large dome ceiling with no end to it, as if you were standing in a large majestic church. I will never forget this experience in all my life. The work that Harry was also doing was exploring future extensions to the network of the tunnels at any new levels. After all it was the drive for more gold findings, was what it was all about, to keep the mine profitable.

With the extension of the power house, a new method of cooling the massive generators was needed so the management decided that a large external cooling tower was to be constructed close by. The principle was that the hot water from the generators was to be pumped to the top of a timber structure with wooden louvers allowing the water to dribble down and so, in the process of it travelling down, to be cooled and then collected in a large concrete basin at the bottom of the tower and then as cooled water to be fed through the generators to prevent them from overheating. On the mining

staff there was a group of Italian grano workers who did all the mixing and placing of any concrete at the mine site and when we were asked to work at this cooling tower structure, they had already laid the heavy duty reinforced concrete slab with the starter bars 75mm from the outer edge all around.

The man in charge of this team, also an Italian, is one I will never forget. His name was Dominic. So Tony, Piet and myself were instructed to make up the formwork in order to form a concrete wall 4 foot (1200mm) high on the edge of this 5 meter square slab. So the first thing we did was to make and install the outer timber wall of the formwork and secure it safely with braces to keep it plumb upright and dead straight. Then we had to wire together all the reinforcement to the starter bars that were already in place and after that, to complete the boxing, we were to build and install the inner wall of timber. The next and last thing was to secure bolts through the whole lot and put plastic pipe spreaders around the bolts to prevent the formwork from blowing apart by the pressure of the concrete being consolidated by the vibrator. We had put plenty of braces to the top of the formwork and when Gerry came over to inspect our work he was very happy with our efforts.

The next day the Italians were going to pour the walls and in hindsight I should have suggested to Gerry that at least one of us should be there to keep an eye on the pouring, just in case. By late morning we were asked to rush over because the formwork was not standing up too well. All three of us raced over to the site where the concrete was being poured and we knew immediately what the problem was. The bloody Italians had taken some of the braces away from the formwork because they felt that they were in their way, and of course the formwork moved out of line and now they were going crook at us. Tony lost his temper at Dominic because it was him apparently who had knocked the braces off, and the hot tempered Italian told Tony to "get fucked" and then Tony, and that was the comical part of the whole episode, told Dominic to "get double fucked". I can still see the whole confrontation next to the concrete wall that now needed straightening up as best as we could. It never was perfect any more after that. After a few days to allow the concrete to cure, we stripped the formwork and plugged up the bolt holes through the concrete wall. Following that we started to build the tower about five metres high with the timber louver blades as required to do the cooling process. It looked very impressive alongside the power house.

One day when we were having lunch in the workshop, Gerry came over and joined us with a cup of tea and then informed us that the next Monday morning a truck would take us to Big Bell, another gold mine site just out of Big Bell Town, which was about 15 minutes drive from Cue. Cue was about 80 km from Mount Magnet. He explained that the township of Big Bell was

like a ghost town as the mine was closed down in 1955 and everybody had left town. There was only one double storey building there and that was the pub. Someone had recently bought this building, which was in good nick, for a couple of thousand pounds in the hope that the mine might open up again in the future. The mine was owned by an American group of business people and they were relying on a manager onsite to report to them. The whole mine was managed poorly, so the Americans decided to close it down. The management of Hill 50 bought all the buildings on the mine site for a song and now we were going to be sent there to demolish the buildings ready for transportation to Hill 50.

As the mine site was about 2 km outside the town, we needed transport to and fro, so Piet's motorbike went on the truck as well as my rifle with ammo and food to see us through. When we got there and were driving through the town, all what we saw was exactly what Gerry described to us before: a real ghost town. Streets with only some brick fireplaces or laundry brick coppers and some concrete slabs left behind. Just here and there a simple house with knocked out windows and open doors, almost inviting you to come in and have a look, and that is exactly what we did. You would not believe it, in one of the front rooms there was a large double bed with just a mattress on it. We there and then adopted this as our "place of residence" and dumped all our gear there before moving onto the mine site to have a look around with Gerry and his truck driver. What we were required to do was to demolish the buildings in sections, leaving as much as possible of the wall coverings on the frames and cut the floors into sections not wider than ten foot wide so that they would be transportable on the truck. After this first day at the mine I walked back to our "place of residence" in town with my rifle and a sharp knife hoping that I might be able to shoot a young kangaroo for our first "home" cooked meal while Piet went back to town on his motorbike and started to sort ourselves out in this old house.

The walk to town in a straight line was a lot shorter than the curved road from the mine. I was lucky to get myself a nice looking young kangaroo and after cutting both the hind legs off, I was soon back with Piet, who was able to rig up a bushman's fridge in order to keep the butter from melting and to preserve the kangaroo meat for a few days at least. Now for those of you that don't know what a bushman's fridge is, I will try and explain how it works.

ou somehow make a cage of wire and then hang a heavy piece of jute over it, fully covering it in order to keep the flies out and then hang a large tin full of water over it with a small hole in the bottom allowing the jute to remain wet. With a bit of a breeze around it, the contents would remain cool as long as there was water dripping on the top of it. That night we had our first kangaroo

meal and for the rest of the month, that we were there, we ate nothing else but just that. It was quite tender but a bit strong so with some tomato sauce it was all right.

Some of the buildings that we took apart were dormitories obviously designed to house the mine workers and as in Hill 50, a lot of them were young men. I remember when taking one particular building apart with a few holes in the wall cladding, which we needed to take off the wall, we found a whole lot of what looked like spent condoms which must have been pushed trough the hole after use. I bet that these walls could tell a story or two. It is crazy the things you do, although we were working seven days a week and ten hours a day, we still had some time to amuse ourselves and at the back of this house where we were camping, there was an old shed with a lot of rubbish stacked away in boxes and in one of them we found a carton of 303 cartridges, but there was no 303 riffle in sight. Now in the shed there was an old work bench with a vice mounted on top of it. You never guess what we did with it. We mounted a 303 cartridge in the vice with the bullet facing away from us and then from the back of the house we practiced our shooting skills with my 22 rifle on the back of the cartridge where normally the firing pin of the 303 riffle would fire the cartridge. It was not easy and we finished up getting closer and closer in order to get the result of the bigger bang. And it did happen. It became just a form of entertainment and lucky for us, we did not get hurt in the process.

One morning I woke up and as said before there were no windows in the window openings and I saw a kangaroo hopping along in the street just before our house, so I grabbed my riffle and sitting on the edge of the bed, I aimed and shot the kangaroo. I have never seen Piet get up so quickly when the noise of the gun woke him up. Ah well, another few days of meat for our dinner. When the truck picked up the last lot building segments about a month after us going to Big Bell, we were ready to move back to Hill 50 and to a better bed to sleep on and better meals than the kangaroo and tomato sauce combination I was getting sick of. I was looking forward to the Saturday night dance coming up the following Saturday and Piet was anxious for a better sleeping partner in bed than me. In other words we were glad to be back in Mount Magnet.

One thing I should mention while I think of it. Remember when I told you before that when I moved into the boarding house and I had trouble sleeping in the first week because of this fridge compressor stopping and starting outside my bed room? Well the first few nights in that old Big Bell house, I had trouble going to sleep because that noise, that I had grown so used to before, was not there any more, in other words it was too quiet.

While we were away, Corry met a lot of people and became friendly with some of them and somehow got the hang of cutting some people's hair and that became known around town. So when I got back to living in the boarding house again, one evening the lady that ran the boarding house and lived there with her husband, and her 12 year daughter, asked me if I was as good as Corry was in cutting hair. I said that I had done it before and then she asked if I could help her out and cut her daughter's hair. Yes no problem, I will do it tonight after dinner, I said. So after dinner the daughter was sitting on a high stool in the kitchen and I was given a pair of scissors and a comb. After putting a sheet over her shoulders, as I knew the hairdresser does, I started to cut some of her hair off, while the mother was watching me carefully. I did not like the scrutiny very much so I tried to place my self between the girl and the mother, but the mother started to move around in the kitchen in order to see better on how I was getting on and in the process I started to get a little bit hot under the collar. I got the impression that she was not that very impressed with my efforts. After a while I thought that I had cut off enough hair and as there was a fair bit on the ground, I asked her if she was happy with the result and she said that it was OK. I just wanted to get out of her kitchen as fast as I could and get some fresh air. WOW!

The gold mining process is a very interesting one. It all starts with the drilling way below ground level near the end of the tunnels. Using the heavy machine mounted air driven drills operated by the trained drillers, holes of about 40mm diametres were drilled into wall surfaces and then these holes were filled with dynamite charges with detonators and these explosives were connected with wires so that they could be detonated simultaneously at a time. Of course at blasting time everybody moved to a safer location. Then after inspection when the blasting was done, the small loaders moved in to collect the rock from the blasting area and dump it into the small wagons which were transported to the main shaft in order to be hauled up to the surface and then stock piled for transport to the crushers to be crushed to smaller rock pieces. These smaller rocks were then taken to the ball mill. The ball mill was located in a large shed and it consisted of a number of large machines that in a way looked like great concrete mixers. The smaller size reduced rocks went into this "mixer" with a heap of hardened steel balls and then these mixers rotated and rotated until the rocks were pulverized to dust almost. The steel balls, smaller in size a bit by now, and the rock dust were separated and then the dust was placed in a large container with water, lime and cyanide and other chemicals to react for a while. Because of this combination of chemicals, there was a separation taking place of the gold from the other impurities and because of this most of the impurities could be drained away.

Now by heating the leftover substance, which contained mainly the gold, the pure gold could now be cast into the gold bar shape container for its final product being the gold bar. Piet and I were becoming well known around the place and as we were after all carpenters, we were always walking around with our nail bag on with the claw hammer hanging through the belt.

On this particular day Gerry invited us to witness the pouring of the gold bars in the very secure area where nobody was allowed in. It was really something else and we both were in awe of this moment, which in my mind I would really call historical, because not many people would ever get the opportunity to witness this event.

By now it was about the middle of February 1957 and I felt that my time at Hill 50 was running to an end. I wanted to go back to Perth and what had been lingering in the back of my mind for a while, was coming to the front, meaning the image of the girl that my sister Bep got friendly with. So I started to make arrangements, like selling my CZ motor bike and giving my one weeks notice to the management of the mine and the people at the boarding house. I think that Piet was expecting that this was about to happen, so to him it was not a surprise. As it happened, I found out that someone working at the mine was going to Perth on the day after my termination and I was offered a lift, although I had to sit in the back of the ute. In hindsight I reckon that I had a terrific time at Hill 50 and I had gained a lot of knowledge about gold mining while I made a lot of friends. Piet and Corry were happy to stay on at Mount Magnet and Piet was well respected at the mine for all the good work that he did. As Corry was well on the way with her first pregnancy, she and Piet were looking forward to the birth in Mount Magnet in the not too distant future.

What I found out later on was that their first baby only lived for about one hour after birth and was malformed. What a terrible way for them to start their life of building up their own family. When Corry became pregnant again they decided to move to Geraldton and they moved in with Piet’s mother in Durlacher Street while Piet found work with a local builder. Then again they were struck by tragedy when their second baby did not survive either. This was almost impossible to take after their previous experience in Mount Magnet. But they proved to be a very courageous couple after this tragic loss and when Corry was expecting a baby again, on advise from the local Doctor, they moved to Perth hoping that with the Specialists available there, that they might get lucky this time around.

As time proved it, that was a good decision because at the end they were blessed with a healthy boy, which was named Garry. Thank God for that.

CHAPTER 9

RIET CLIJNK (CLYNK)

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The Dutch name Clijnk gradually, throughout the Clynk family, changed to the Australian spelling of: "Clynk".

When I turned up at the Grenville Street on the late Saturday afternoon with my tool box and all my other possessions like clothes etc, Mum and Dad were very surprised to see me as I had not notified them of my home coming. I did telephone them occasionally from Hill 50, but I do like surprises and this was one of them. It was nice to enjoy a "Mum's home cooked meal" and to sleep in my own bed again and boy did I sleep well during the first night at home.

My bedroom was the small single one at the end of the back verandah with the sloping ceiling under the rake of the roof. I had my priorities worked out and the first thing that I was going to do on Monday morning was to buy myself a ute. And that was exactly what I did. I bought a secondhand Holden ute, sky blue of colour and only four years old. The back had no cover on it and as I wanted my tools protected in the back, the first thing that I did was to make myself a canopy to fit on the back. It had to be such that it could be taken off easy just in case of a bigger load. Out of some pine boards I made the shape of half a circle and used it as a profile to make three arches made up with four layers of 30mm wide waterproof plywood bent and using water proof glue and pinned together following the shape of the pine profile. The base end of these arches I mounted on top of the side wall of the back of the ute and secured them with metal strips to the inside of the wall of the ute. All what I had to do now was to cover the top with a sheet of 5mm waterproof plywood and give it a couple of coats of marine varnish for protection. What I needed next was a cover at the back to keep the rain out and that was soon made too.

I met up with Harry and Bep again as they often called in at home and he said that he was working in Doubleview for a builder by the name of Mr. Brown, constructing street after street of State Housing Commission homes

all in timber frame construction similar to what John and I were doing in Beaconsfield before we went to Geraldton in 1952. He said that they were always looking for carpenters and he would make enquires for me. The next day Harry called in and said that they would be happy to take me on the very next day, so I was put with Harry in his team to work. For weeks we did nothing else than building bases, which consisted of stumping, bearers and joists. I tell you when you do nothing else than just that, you get very fast and good at it and that was the purpose of the way this builder worked. He had teams like us, framing teams that did nothing but framing, others that just did the outside cladding in asbestos sheeting and roofing teams followed by the groups of other trades people and the inside fixing teams. It was all very well organized and working six days a week, the houses appeared so fast that it was a joy to the eye.

The long Easter weekend was here and seeing that I had some time to myself I planned to call in at Gosnells where Riet Clynk's family were living in Crandon Street just one block away from Dorothy street. Their accommodation was a timber framed and asbestos home just big enough to house their family and of course Riet's father and her brothers John and Bert built it themselves while they were still living in North Beach. So I called in on Easter Saturday unannounced and after some casual talk I asked Riet if she would like to go to the pictures with me that evening.

Now in Gosnells there was an open air picture theatre along the highway not far from Dorothy Street and that is where we went that evening. The seating arrangements were not that comfortable being the old canvass sheet seats that were very hard to get out off, but do you know what, it did not matter, because I had the company with me that I had been dreaming about for a long time, while working up north in Mount Magnet.

It was the first of many trips to the pictures for the two of us and the relationship started to develop from here on. Riet's father was a very strict sort of a person, probably a bit protective of his eldest daughter, and he stipulated that I was only allowed to see her on the Wednesday night, Saturday night and the Sunday. Now that suited me really well as I was working every Saturday and had other things to do on the other evenings. From the start I felt that he was not that keen on me and throughout my life that did not really change much, while her mother seemed quite happy with me as a suitor of her daughter and that never changed either.

It was in early July that I asked Riet to marry me and she accepted. I was over the moon as you can well imagine, so we set the date for the engagement on her birthday in about a month time on the fifth of August that year which was 1957. I was 25 years old at this stage. The next Saturday morning we went



into Perth to Mazzucchelli's Jewelry shop to select an engagement ring for Riet. The party would be in Gosnells at her parents place. This decision so soon after starting to court her, was in hindsight the best thing I could have done, as you will find out later on.

On one of our Sundays together we went to the Mundaring Weir dam just for a drive and to look around as the dam was supposed to be overflowing. It was a magnificent sight and I had my camera with me and as Riet came down some circular steps I got her to let me take a photo of her in her light blue dress and it really brought out how lovely she looked. Unbeknown to me at that time, this photo was going to play an important role in my life as you will find out later.

The friendship between Mat and Kitty Iriks and my Mum and Dad flourished while I was away up North and of course I found out that he was also working as a carpenter. My work with Mr. Brown the builder was starting to run out as their contract with the State Housing Commission in Doubleview was nearly finished. Through Riet's father I found out that a certain Mr. Ernie Mills living in Gosnells, a registered builder, who worked for a Yugoslav saw mill owner named Harry, and he was looking for carpenters to work in Cloverdale. The saw mill was situated at the end of Hardy road, so not far from the building work in Cloverdale. Harry had contracted with the State Housing

Commission to build timber framed homes and his interest was of course in the supply of timber from his mill. As he had no builder's license or even building experience, he hired Ernie Mills into his business to cover himself. Now the amazing thing was that at that time anybody could get a builder's license just by applying for it and paying a fee. So all of a sudden a butcher, or anybody for that matter, could become a builder over night. I suppose that is how Ernie Mills got his official papers to become a builder. Just as a point of interest Ernie Mills was a lay preacher. After my approach to him I was given the job of building the complete timber structure of a number of State Homes in Cloverdale.

All that I now needed was a mate to work with and then I thought of Mat Iriks. After talking with him he was very interested and he knew of another Dutchman, a young fellow by the name of Jan Uyen who lived in Scarborough, and we made a team of three. As I had a good set of electrical tools and a generator, we made an immediate start in Cloverdale and we were on our way. We worked well together and Mat in particular was very happy with the arrangements. We worked longer than usual hours and we made good money, which was naturally important to Mat, being a family man with dependants.

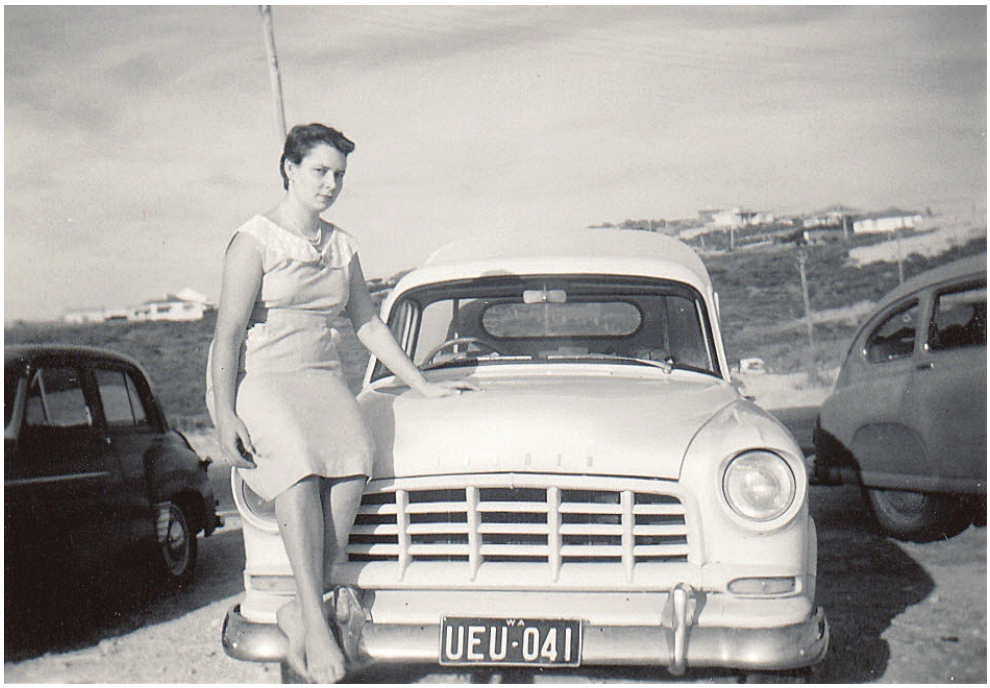
Along Albany Highway near the junction of Manning Road, there was a sewing factory owned by a Constance Millen. Riet was working there as a machinist on a commercial sewing machine and during the lunch hour, I would pick her up and drive along Manning Road, park under a big tree in the shade and we would have lunch together. I would do anything to catch up with her. From Cloverdale to her place of work was not that far really and we both enjoyed the little break.

While we were working our backsides off, we had to contend with the problem that there was always a shortage of timber on the job, because whoever worked out the list of quantities, obviously did not do a good job. Ernie Mills called in almost daily and he organized for shortfalls to be delivered as soon as possible, but we always lost time while waiting for the timber to be delivered. So I suggested to Ernie Mills that I would be happy to work out the timber lists on our jobs, in order to save time on our side and he was happy with that arrangement. So I got the plans of our next houses to build and we lost no more time. I spent my evenings making up those lists. I remember one incident where they delivered a truck load of timber for our next house and then the following morning the whole lot was gone. All that was left were the truck tire marks in the sand.

As my future started to look good, I wanted to do something about improving myself and felt that I needed my own builder's registration ticket. I had already found out that the easy way that others before me had used to get



On our engagement day on the 5th of August 1957



Riet sitting on the bonnet of my new Holden Ute.

their papers was not available any more. I had to go to night school to get my qualifications and I accepted that fact as something I wanted to do. So at the start of 1958 I enrolled in Perth at the St Georges Street College for two nights a week and got stuck into it. It was not all that difficult as I was a tradesman with a fair amount of building experience already, but at times it was hard not to fall asleep in class after a day of physical work out on the job.

Talking about falling asleep, I used to pick up Riet on a Saturday evening to take her to the drive-in pictures somewhere. She used to pick which one we would go to and it sometimes involved in a lot of driving before I would get home at the end of the evening. Just follow me, driving from Grenville Street in Joondanna Heights over Walcott Street and East Perth and the Causeway, along Shepperton Road and Albany Highway to Gosnells, pick up Riet and if I was unlucky, she had chosen the drive-in at Floreat Park, meaning all the way back to Perth and then through Cambridge Street Wembley all the way to Floreat Park.

Then after the film was finished, all the way back to Gosnells and then back to Grenville Street, doing more than a 100 km in one evening. Is it any wonder that I fell asleep in the drive-in pictures? This fact of my falling asleep has been haunting me all my life wherever I went. In most cases, if I got six hours of sleep over night, I would be doing well. Much to Riet's father's annoyance, when I was at their place on a Sunday afternoon and just sitting around

in the lounge room talking about anything, politics or anything else that did not interest me much, I would just sit there and doze off while he was talking. It was one of the things that Riet and I would argue about and often we parted without making up.

Can you remember that early on in our relationship I mentioned our trip to the Mundaring Weir dam and that I had taken a photo of her on the circular steps? Well I had an enlarged painting made of it in colour and had it framed. Riet had been showing signs of losing interest in me and I heard afterwards that her father sort of questioned her how serious that she really was with me. At times even the engagement ring was pulled off her finger and she stamped it in the ground in front of their front door. She would then later on dig it up again when she had cooled off a bit. On this particular Saturday evening, when I got the painted picture back from the artist framed and all, I went to Gosnells to give it to her, but found out that she was not home. She had offered to help out with the catering in the Gosnells hall along Dorothy Street. So I left the art piece with her mother in order to give it to her and I just went and waited in my car along the road near the hall to pick her up after she was all finished and planned to drive her home.

I waited and waited and kept on watching the front entrance of the hall. At about 11 o'clock people were starting to leave but Riet did not show up. By the time that just about everybody was gone, I went inside and asked if Riet Clynk was still there and I was told that she left about half an hour ago. Well what was I to do. I thought that maybe she had seen me waiting and did not want to talk to me and at this time of the night I did not dare call at her house as everybody would be in bed by now, so in not the best of moods I drove home.

I decided that I would call in as usual on the next Wednesday evening and see what would happen. I finished up having a worthwhile ally in her mother who took a liking to me and she gave her the piece of art painting on the Sunday morning and she must have been able to make her see that Henk was not such a bad bloke to end up with. When I saw her on the Wednesday we talked it all out and we went on from there.

The place in Cannington where Riet was working for quite a few years was like a hot house. It was really not more than a shed with a tin roof and in summer time the machinery was very hot to the touch, so when Riet's sister Anna, who was working in Perth in a sewing workplace in Hay Street called Childwear, mentioned to her that they wanted ladies with sewing experience to work there. Riet jumped at it and got out of the "sweat shop" in Cannington pretty fast.

I broke up with Mat Iriks and Jan Uyen as I felt that I was entering the next stage of my building career. Henk Werven became a good friend of mine

and often Riet and I would call in at their Doubleview State home to pay them a visit with the unavoidable result of me starting to doze off while we were talking. I just could not help it and it did get me into trouble again with Riet.

Henk had become a painting contractor just working by himself. This way he could work longer hours and Saturdays and thus make more money. His wife Herma was very supportive of his efforts and he did everything for his family of three kids. One thing I did notice was that he was a very heavy smoker rolling his own smokes with heavy Turkish tobacco. I did not know at that time, that this fact was going to cost him dearly.

My brother John and Riekie Verschuren announced their engagement and at the same time stipulated that they intended to get married on the 27th of December 1958, one day after Boxing Day with the wedding taking place in Northam.

By the middle of 1958 Riet's father pointed out to me that the R. & I. bank were having an auction on a Saturday morning for a number of blocks along North Lake Road and the area behind there in Myaree, not far from McCoy Street. The auction was to start at 11 am and in the advertisement it was advised to be there by 10 am in order to look around and study the maps available on site. It seemed a good idea to be there and find out what was going and at what approximate prices they were selling.

Riet and I were there at 10 am and the Bank had erected a large tent with a lot of chairs and a small podium at the front for the auctioneer. There were a lot of blocks on offer and many people around, which indicated to me that the bidding could be brisk. At 11 o'clock the auctioneer started the proceedings with reading out the conditions which were cash only offers, 10% down payment with the offer and balance of payment in 30 days. I had no problem with that as I came well prepared to buy as I wanted to build our home before we would be married. I was amazed at the speed that the blocks were snapped up and as this was the first time that I had attended an auction, I realized that if you hesitated, someone else would beat you to it.

The blocks were all one quarter of an acre in size and that was big enough for me. A couple of times I bid on a block and then some one else offered a higher figure and before I had a chance to offer a higher amount the auctioneer's hammer went down followed with a loud "sold", and I had missed out again. I had my eye on a block in North Lake road and when that one was offered by the auctioneer for bidding, I went for it and although others were bidding as well, I stuck with it and at the end my bid for 385 pounds was successful.

From there we went straight back to Gosnells and told Riet's Mum and Dad about the outcome of this morning's auction and showed them the plan

of the area and I thanked Riet's Dad for pointing the auction out to me. Of course when I got home that evening and I told my Mum and Dad about the block in Myaree, they were also delighted as they realized that I was serious about settling down with Riet. I had already been thinking about what I was going to build and I decided that it would be a red brick foundation with a timber framed structure and tiled roof. The design would be a two bedroom home with a sleep out at the back from the back verandah, one bathroom and a lounge at the front and kitchen at the side with the laundry and toilet behind the kitchen off the back verandah as well.

My ute was starting to play up with its starter motor and the generator not charging the car battery, so I called in at Deering Autronics in North Perth. While I was waiting for them to fix it I got talking to the owner and when he found out that I was working for myself in the building industry, he asked if I would be interested to do a small extension for him at the back of his house in Cottesloe. It turned out that it was a laundry with an outside toilet in brick.

A couple of weeks before that I had a sudden painful attack on the side near my hip and after seeing the doctor and some x-rays it was revealed that I had a kidney stone in my right hand kidney. When I told the doctor that I had worked in Mount Magnet and had been drinking a lot of water there, he knew straight away that the water out there would have been full of iron and thus caused my problem.

He said that if I could pass it the natural way, that would be good, otherwise he would have to operate. He did ask me to try and catch it if possible. I was in Cottesloe a few weeks after the doctor's visit, working late at night with lights, when I needed to have a pee so I went near the back fence and stood in the high grass relieving myself when all of a sudden I felt a terrible pain and guess what!

Down went the kidney stone. There was no way that was going to look for this little stone in the high grass in the semi darkness.

A few weeks later as Riet and I were driving back from the drive-in in Claremont on a Sunday evening I decided to drive through Kings Park to look out over the city lights and then I noticed that the car motor was over heating. The red light came on at the dashboard so I stopped out in front of a house and helped myself to some water after letting the motor cool down. It seemed to be a warning sign that something was not quite right.

The very next Wednesday evening on the way back from Gosnells as I came to the roundabout before entering the Causeway, I must have dozed off and I nicked the cast iron "Keep Left" sign before entering the roundabout. I damaged the rear vision mirror on the driver's side and also the door handle in the process. It did wake me up alright but I could not open the driver's side

door anymore. With the overheating and these new problems I thought that it was time for me to trade my ute in for a new one and that is what I did.

I bought a new Holden yellow ute and when I turned up in Gosnells the next Saturday, Riet was telling me that when she was sitting in the right hand side of the bus going to work in Perth on the Thursday morning, she noticed that the "Keep Left" sign was broken off and wondered who the silly bugger was that did this. Of course I looked very sheepish and got a few laughs in the process. As before, I made myself again a plywood canopy on the back of the new ute similar to the one that I made before on the old ute which had served me so well.

Upon my return from Mount Magnet, I was introduced to a Dutchman named Jan van de Wal. He had his own accountancy business and he started to do my end of year's tax submissions. I had a business discussion with him about my future building activities and told him that I was going to night classes to get my builder's registration ticket. He pointed out that the way that I was working now, there was a limit to the value of contracts that I was allowed to take on and if I was to take on a contract for the building of a house without a builder's registration ticket, I would be in trouble.

It would be a long time before I would be fully qualified so he suggested that I form a company with someone who had such a ticket, and who would be one of the directors. I had been dealing with J. & W.Bateman, who were hardware merchants, and John Saunders was one of their representatives who were looking after me. I already knew that he had a builder's registration ticket from when it was easy to get, as I have already explained before, and after talking to him about it he was quite happy to be a director in my company. There would be no remuneration for his services as long as I was prepared to buy all my hardware requirements through him.

The company was registered with the assistance of Jan van de Wal and the registered name was H. P. OORSCHOT BUILDERS Pty. Ltd. Also the arrangement with John Saunders was that once I got my own builder's registration ticket as a result of my studies, he would cease to be a director of my company. Prior to this happening I had a number of 30 day trading accounts with various suppliers but in my own name and that was quite acceptable but after the formation of the company, they wanted personal guarantees from myself in order to safeguard their accounts. I understood that this was the acceptable thing to do in business.

I had just contracted to build a large brick free-standing garage alongside an existing house in Daglish. There was an existing timber garage structure where I had to build the brick one, so after talking to Dad I suggested that we could very well do with a work shop at the end of the concrete drive on the

right hand side of the house in the Grenville Street, and he agreed. So I hired a flat top truck and carted the wall sections of this timber garage in Daglish to the Grenville Street and stored them against the side fence until the concrete floor was poured ready to take this timber garage. It had two timber garage doors that needed fixing up but now we had a workshop at home at very little cost to Mum and Dad. It did not take long thereafter to extend this garage at the back making a really nice workshop in which I spent a lot of evenings making timber joinery and cupboards for the jobs that I started to take on to build.

Through the connection of Jan van de Wal, I was introduced to the Dutch Building Society in order to get a loan from them to build our house in North Lake Road in Myaree. It did not take long before this person that I met at the Dutch Building Society, called me and asked me to meet him in their office. They had a problem with another builder that had contracted to build a house in Morley and went broke on them. All that he had done was build the brick foundation and then abandon the project. Would I take over the contract and complete the job for them. Well work is work and as long as there was money in it, I would not knock it back and I thought it might lead to more work in the process which it did. Because of the requirements of insuring the building works, I met up with a chap in the insurance company, who wanted a house built in Watermans Bay. A double story timber construction on a brick foundation and his name was Adrian van de Zwaan. I was getting quite busy with work and somehow I had to get the plans drawn up for our own house in Myaree.

The plans for our house had been drawn up and were passed by the Melville City Council, so I started to plan my building activity. Another thing that we did was to set a date for our wedding and we came up with Saturday the 17th of October 1959.

My sister Riet was working as a domestic help in Walcott Street for a Jewish couple, who were both dentists working from home. I had been planning to have a complete set of false teeth fitted in, as my own teeth were not that crash hot at this stage, so I made an appointment to see them. As it turned out my appointment was with the lady dentist and she explained to me that the best way to go about it was to pull the whole lot out in the one hit and then put the new dentures on top of the fresh gums after all the extractions were done. To me it sounded a bit painful but she insisted that this was the best way to go. I gave in and then she made imprints of both top and bottom teeth on order to make the new dentures from them and she was going to phone me when they would be ready.



Our first house at 83 North Lake Road Myaree.

So a couple of weeks later she phoned and made a time for me to be there on Saturday the 13th of December 1958. Now this particular date was an important date in Riet's family as it was her father's birthday and of course I was expected to be there in Gosnells. So after the bloody mess at the dentist with my new dentures pressed over the bloody gums in my mouth, I went to Gosnells to attend this birthday party. In order to pull out all these teeth top and bottom, I was given a lot of injections to numb the pain, but during the late afternoon this numbness started to wear off and I started to feel the pain a bit. Now I loved eating and chewing peanuts and of course there were plenty of peanuts on offer at the birthday party but there was no chance of me munching on peanuts in the precarious state that I found myself in.

What were also on offer were those small Frankfurter sausages which I tried to bite but even that was impossible so in the end I just swallowed them as they were and that alone became a form of entertainment for the rest of the gathering that evening. I know that right now I could not repeat that performance, but things were different then. By 9 o'clock in the evening I had enough with the pain and feeling so uncomfortable that I just asked to be excused and they were happy for me to go home. One thing was for sure I did not fall asleep on the way back to the Grenville Street that evening. The gums soon settled down and a few months later I had to go back to the dentist to get

a refit on the gums that had shrunk by this time and from thereon it worked out alright.

John's and Riekie's wedding in Northam just after Christmas at the end of 1958 was a very busy affair due to the size of both families and also there were a lot of family friends on both sides. We had no alternative than to stay overnight in Northam after the reception as it would be just too risky to drive home back to Perth. Now although we were engaged at that stage there was no way that Riet's father would allow Riet to stay away overnight with me unless she would be in a hotel room with another lady. As Henk Werven and his wife Herma were also invited to the wedding, Riet's father wanted assurance that Riet and Herma would sleep in the one room and that the two Henks would bunk up in the other room. We accepted his ruling although Riet was 22 years old. The wedding was quite a large affair and after the wedding John and Riekie moved into a rental home in Tuart Hill while looking around to buy a block of land in that area. They eventually bought a block in Sylvia Street nearby and two years later they moved into their own home that John naturally had built himself.

Back in Myaree we met our new neighbours at the back of our block. Norm and Mary Taylor had just moved into their new home with their young sons and we worked together putting up their and our boundary picket fence. The Taylor's turned out to be nice and down to earth people and we became good friends thereafter.

Have you ever heard of the Dutch Repertory Club? Well shortly after coming back from Mount Magnet I was approached to join up with them and they made it all sound so very interesting that I decided that I should try it out. It also involved making light weight timber frames, covering them with canvass, which were to be painted with various sceneries of walls with windows and doors on it. I remember one play called "See how they run", which involved a lot of running on and off the stage chasing each other. It was quite hilarious and a lot of fun. We were to perform in Medina one Saturday evening and so I picked up Riet first on the Saturday morning, before driving to Medina, so that we all could set up the stage together ready for the performance for that night. It turned out to be an enjoyable day and evening and by the time that we were ready to drive home, it was nearly midnight. Then as we drove along High Road past Riverton we were stopped by a young man that asked if we could help him as his car was bogged down and needed someone to pull him out. Luckily I had some rope in the back of the ute and I tried to pull him out, but I started to get bogged as well and after using some branches that we pulled off some trees nearby, we finally got out of the bog. By the time

that we had finished and driven back to Gosnells it was about 3 o'clock in the morning. Everybody seemed fast asleep and Riet got back inside unnoticed.

I finally made a start with building our home by setting out the foundation walls, digging out and pouring the concrete footings and then building the red brick foundation walls about two foot high. While I was working on our own house I also contracted to build a house along High Road in Riverton for some Dutch people and as I was always looking to save money in doing things, I decided to hire, on a late Friday afternoon, a 7 ton tip- truck from Sadliers in North Perth.

I needed a load of brickie's sand for the Riverton job and four loads of filling sand for the verandahs of our own house and doing it this way I would save myself some money. In order to save on the kilometres on the speedometer of the truck, I did not want to drive the truck to the Grenville Street on the Friday afternoon and then the next morning to Bentley, where the sandpit was, so I wanted to park the truck on a parking lot near Sadliers and then drive my ute home from there. This way I would save myself some kilometres, as I would be charged for the hire truck by the kilometres that were driven. So in the process of backing the truck into the parking lot, I managed to nick a power pole with the back of the truck causing some electric overhead wires to snap, resulting in some people in the street losing their power. Knowing the area well, I drove the truck to a telephone booth just around the corner to notify the State Electricity Commission (S.E.C.) of what had happened.

While I was doing this a man had followed me thinking that I was leaving the scene of the incident and started to abuse me. When I explained to him what I was doing and saying that I was so sorry for causing the power failure, he realized that I was genuine in my approach to what had happened.

After that I did not want to leave the truck on the parking lot and drove it home clocking up the extra kilometres. The next morning I was early at the sandpit in Bentley, picked up the load of brickie's sand for Riverton and then went back for the first load of filling sand for Myaree. It started to drizzle and the roads became slippery a bit and driving along Manning Road towards Myaree, the truck started to sway. As I was trying to keep it straight, it swayed more and more to the point that it toppled sideways and the truck landed just off the road on its side with most of the sand spread out on the road verge.

I was shaken a bit and climbed out of the cabin and it did not take long to have some spectators around me. I was not hurt thank goodness for that. It did not take long for a policeman to show and I asked him if he could organize a small crane to put the truck back on its wheels as I wanted to get going and pick-up some more sand from the sandpit.

What I had not noticed, but he did, was that one of the front springs of the truck was broken and according to him that would have caused the truck to start swaying. There was no way that this bloody truck could be driven in this condition and the police officer arranged for a tow truck to come along and pick up the broken down truck and deliver it back to Sadliers in North Perth. That was the end of my planned busy Saturday activity. According to the police officer this truck should have been checked out by the owners before hiring it out on the road and he said in his report that I was in no way to blame for what had happened. I went back with the tow truck driver and the lame truck to Sadliers as my car was parked there and I needed to get my deposit back from them. I took a copy of the police report, to show the truck owners, that they were fully at fault. They did not argue with me on the strength of the evidence that I produced them with. As you can well imagine I had quite a story to tell when I got back to Gosnells that evening. The next Saturday I hired another truck and delivered all the filling sand that I needed for the large back and front verandah. I thought that it would be easier to start working on the frame work with both verandahs filled in and consolidated, so that was the next thing that I did.

As I had got to know Harry from the sawmill in Hardy road quite well from the days that I was working in Cloverdale, he became my regular timber supplier and he gave me an extra discount on the timber for our home which was appreciated. I was getting a bit of help from Riet's brother John with the timber work and the outside cladding which was very useful and it helped me along as I was also busy with other building work. At home things were changing a bit although I was not much at home and often had my meals warmed up after dinner time but that is how it was.

Often I would be working until midnight in the workshop and once Mum found me asleep in the shower in the middle of the night. My sister Bep started to work part time with Watkins selling door to door household products and confectionary and she got my Dad interested in giving away his job with the painter that he was working for. He did not feel all that safe standing on a scaffolding plank doing this painting and instead enjoyed the job of talking and seeing people in this new Watkins job that he was offered.

It meant really that he would be working for himself and as he knew a lot of Dutch people through the Dutch Club, he had no trouble building up a large group of customers. We made some shelves on the wall in his downstairs garage for him to store his wares and as he already had an Austin car, he was happy serving his customers with these Watkins products. During this time Dad received some bad news from Holland where his brother "Heer Oom",

who some years before had left the priesthood and was living with a lady in The Hague, had passed away. Apparently the virus that he picked up in the Belgium Congo, where he worked as a missionary during the war, had undermined his health gradually over the years and had weakened his immune system. Shortly thereafter some more bad news came about his youngest brother Jan, the one that lived with us in Eindhoven and married my Mum's youngest sister Coby. He had succumbed to leukemia at such a young age. The death of his brother Jan hit my Dad more than that of his brother "Heer Oom". I suppose Dad being such a staunch Catholic, could not forgive his brother for leaving the priesthood.

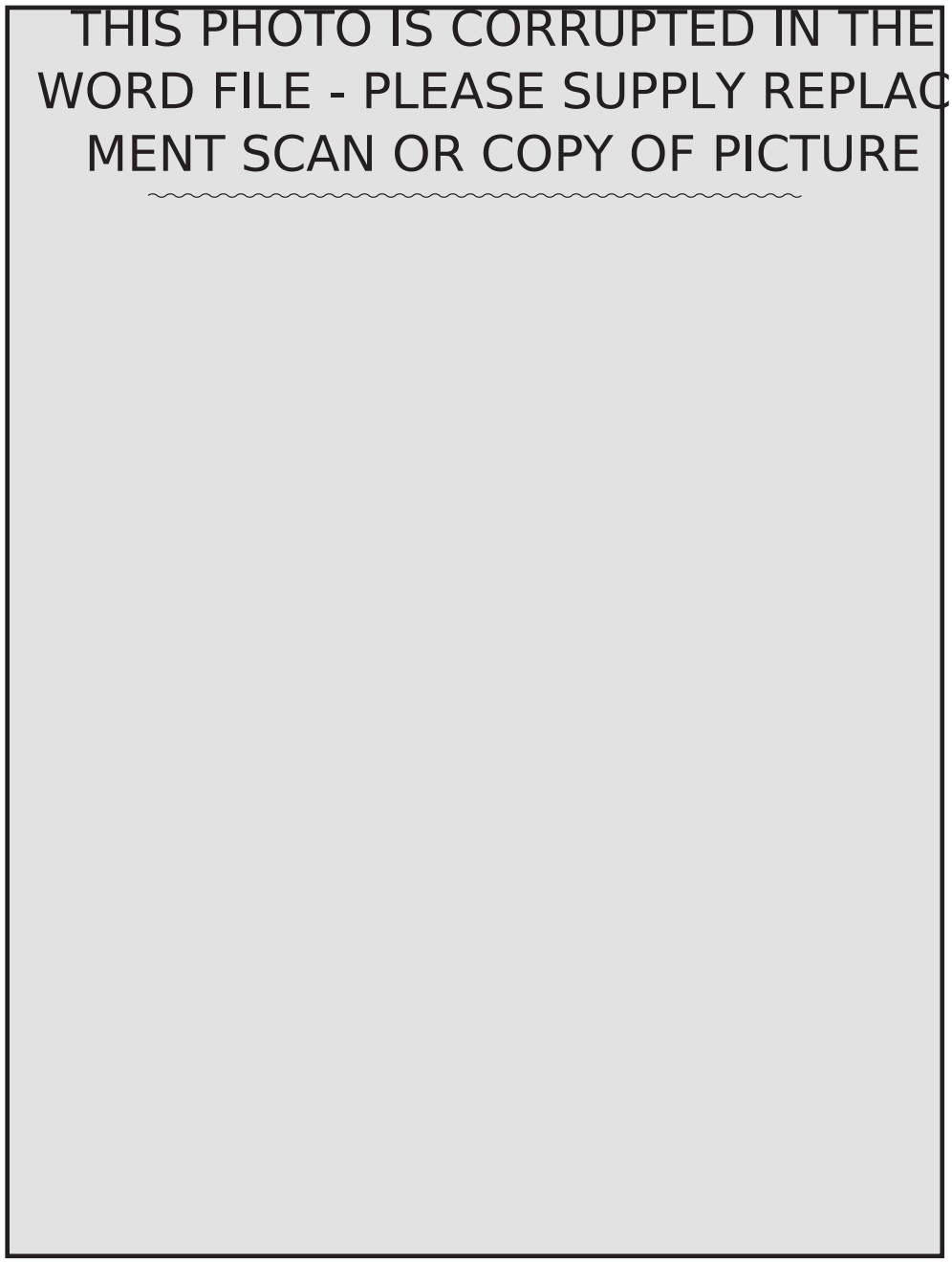
In Gosnells the Clynk family shifted home after they built a new timber framed home on a brick foundation in Hicks Street not far from Fremantle Road just opposite the railway line. Hicks Street has since been extended and renamed Homestead Road. At this stage there were still the strict rules about Riet being home not later than 11 o'clock at night and when I brought Riet home in the evening and she stayed in the car just talking and……., then all of a sudden the front verandah light would be switched on and off a few times, indicating that it was time for Riet to come inside. So from then on we would just stop a few houses back and did our cuddling there out of sight.

I remember on one of our trips back to Gosnells late one evening, we both must have fallen asleep and when someone driving behind us tooted his horn, I found that I was driving on the wrong side of the road. In those days there were just two lanes without a middle strip. The sudden wake up was enough at least for me that evening not to fall asleep again. The house in North Lake Road was nearing completion and it was time to build the separate garage on the right hand side of the house but further back past the back verandah.

We were not going to worry about putting in any gardens until we were married and living there. We had a talk to Father Pieters as it was him that we would like to be the wedding celebrant on the 17th of October and that was all organized well in advance. Jan Hendricks, the photographer, who had his shop in Victoria Park and was a friend of the family and was very experienced in photography, was also arranged for the occasion.

It was worked out with Father Pieters that again the large church were he lived next too, just off Bulwer Street in Highgate, where also Bep and Corry got married, would be our choice for the wedding. Riet's Dad suggested that the reception should be held in the church hall in Dorothy Street if it was available and upon enquiring it was not booked out for the evening of the 17th of October, so we were able to get it for our reception.

Riet was going to stop work two weeks before the wedding date so that she could concentrate on making her own wedding dress, the bridesmaid's dresses



On our wedding day.

for Anna and Teresa, her going away outfit and her mother's dress. All in all it was a lot of work for her. Little Ron, Riet's youngest brother, was going to be the Pageboy and my youngest sister Anne the Flowergirl. My brother John was to be Best Man with my best friend Henk Werven as the Groomsman.
One week before the wedding we were informed by Father Pieters that he

had broken his leg and would not be able to perform the wedding ceremony. He was very sorry about this and he had arranged for a good friend of his, a Monsignor O'Connor from Victoria Park, to take over the wedding ceremony in his place.

Everything was ready, even the basic furniture in our house like the double bed, the kitchen table and chairs and the fridge, and we were looking forward to the big day. John Saunders, the sales rep. from J. & W. Bateman, who was also being the temporary Director in my Company, promised to make a film on his movie camera of the wedding in the church and at the reception and then present it to us as a wedding present. For those that may know or do not know, in those days the film cameras were standard eight, so the film would be a standard eight film. We thought that it was a very nice gesture of him and we felt that it would be something special and as time went on it certainly became that. Over time, as people in the family started to pass on, this film increased in sentimental value everytime we looked at it. When both our parents were not here any more, we still could enjoy them on the film thanks to John's present to us. Thank you John!

On the morning of the 17th of October, we all assembled at the church at about 10:30 am and slowly got ourselves inside the church with myself, the Best Man and Groomsman in the front near the communion rail waiting for the bride to appear. Then with the organ music to accompany her entering the church, on the arm of her father and led by the Pageboy and the Flowergirl, followed by the two Bridesmaids, my darling Riet slowly came towards me to join me in front of all those people to start the ceremony of the wedding. What I had been dreaming about for such a long time, was finally going to happen. There was no objection from the Monsignor for the photographer to take shots inside and for John Saunders to make the film while the ceremony was in progress. Soon we were making our wows to each other and at the end were declared "Husband and Wife" and I was prompted to kiss my wife, which I did with many witnesses in the church watching us. Then we had to go behind the altar to sign the official documents confirming the happy event and thus getting the official proof of our wedding.

We were soon outside the main entrance of the church to receive all the congratulations from everybody and then John Hendricks made some photos of various family groups with both sets of parents and others on the steps of the church. After that we were ushered into the bridal car to take us, with the whole bridal party, to the Queens Gardens in East Perth on the corner of Hay Street and Plain Street in order, amongst all the greenery there, to make some more photos of the bridal group. The photographer took all his time to come up with the best of photos and it was already pretty hot on

this October day. I was glad when he decided that he had enough material to present to us as a lasting momentum of our special day. From there on we were driven to Gosnells to the church hall in Dorothy Street where the reception was to be held. By the time we eventually got there it was about 4:30 in the afternoon and we were all looking forward to some refreshments and to be able to sit down and relax.

By six o'clock the four course dinner started which was well received by all and was very enjoyable and then the toasting and the speeches followed with the many jokes and anecdotes about incidents that had happened during our lives, all designed to get everybody in a happy and laughing mood. Of course my turn came to have a few words to say and I thanked everybody for being at the church and here for the festivities and I thanked Riet's Mum and Dad for providing me with such a lovely lady to be my wife for the rest of my life.

This was followed with the bridal waltz of Riet and myself with everybody joining in afterwards on the dance floor. It was great to see the many members from both families mixing and enjoying each others company throughout the evening.

By about 10 pm Riet was taken to her parents place to change into her going away outfit and when she came back it was time for us to leave and say goodbye to all those that were present. They made a human tunnel for the both of us to get through and then we drove off in my Holden ute to spend the first night together in Myaree in our own house.

The minute that I started to drive, there was a racket at the back of the car from a string with cans attached to it and every time that I changed speed, I could hear the noise of the stones that someone had put in the hub caps of the wheels.

When we were out of sight, I stopped and got rid of the cans and rope at the back but, I was not going to worry about the stones in the hub caps at this stage. For Riet to leave home for good was very emotional as she was very attached to her Mum, so as we were driving along Albany Highway and crossing the bridge just outside of Gosnells, she suddenly said "I want to go back". I pulled up on the side of the road and gave her a cuddle and then she was all right and we proceeded on our way to our home.

The next morning we decided that we would go to Perth and attend the High Mass at Saint Mary's Cathedral at 10:30 am. I had forgotten all about the stones in the hub caps and I just left them there. When we pulled up in the side street from the Cathedral to park my ute, another car pulled up on the other side of the street with exactly the same problem as we had. We had a short talk with the young couple that emerged from their car and it was really funny for this to happen at just this very moment. The four of us entered the

Cathedral, attended Mass and then Riet and I went home afterwards to have our first lunch as a married couple. We took it easy for the rest of the day and made preparations for our honeymoon down south to start on Monday morning.

Three weeks before the wedding date I contracted to build a home in Albany for some Dutch people whom I met through the Dutch Building Society. These people were already living in Albany and had put the plans into the Albany Shire for me in order to get the building permit. As we would be going through Albany during our honeymoon, I was planning to do the setting out of the home and meet up with the bricklayers who were going to dig out and pour the concrete footings. They would then build the brick foundation out of red clinker bricks ready for the local carpenters to do all the floor, wall and roof construction. I loaded all the necessary setting out materials and nails and tools in the back of the ute before leaving on the Monday morning. Before we left we visited Norm and Mary Taylor down the back and asked them if they could just keep an eye on our place while we were away honeymooning.

Mid morning we were on our way and took it easy going through Mandurah and Bunbury allowing a few stops for sight seeing and refreshments and then landed in Busselton for our first overnight stop. Not knowing anything in Busselton we wanted to book in for the night in the local pub asking for a room with a double bed. We were told that they only had single beds in their rooms. We were a newly married couple and we definitely needed a double bed! They looked funny at us and said sorry. We tried another location with the same result, only single beds.

We decided to take it and after viewing the room we thought that we could move the beds side by side and make a makeshift double bed out of it. After dinner we walked around town a bit and found that it was very quiet, not much going on in the form of entertainment. We made an early night and after moving one single bed alongside of the other one we found out that it blocked the door into the room. It was comfortable and it gave us the required solution of sleeping together.

The next morning after breakfast and paying our bill, we went over to the famous Busselton timber jetty which was apparently the longest such structure in the Southern Hemisphere and walked all along to the very end. It was quite a cool walk and I was very impressed with the total structure of it all in timber bolted together. There was also a provision for a small train on rails in the centre of the jetty right up to the end.

At the Tourist Bureau we picked up some brochures of the caves that were open to the public along Caves Road between Yallingup and Augusta.

We visited two caves, the Mammoth Cave and the Lake Cave and we were shown the formation of the stalactites and the stalagmites. The stalactites were hanging from the roof of the cave and over many years the drops of water carrying calcium slowly built up the hanging formation, while when the drop of water with calcium fell on the cave floor, it started to build up a standing formation over a very long period of time and that was then called a stalagmite. In many cases these two formations started to grow together and when they did it then became a pillar that in time would get thicker and develop into a solid column. Seeing a cave, any cave for that matter, was worth doing as it was just a different world down under.

From there on we drove to Augusta and found a nice motel to spend the night. The next morning we paid a visit to the light house at the very southern point past Augusta overlooking the ocean in three directions. Following that we had a look at the old water wheel and when I say old it really looked old and dilapidated and I was amazed that it still stood where it was built originally many years ago. From there we made our way via Margaret River to the Karri Valley area where the giant karri trees were a real eye opener. So massive and tall and on one tree they had made a lookout high up giving you a chance to look over the whole area. It was just something else!

We spent the night in Manjimup and then the following morning we drove through Denmark to Albany and found the block in Hare Street, half way between the town site and Middleton Beach, where I had to do the setting out of the house that I was going to build for these Dutch people.

After finding a motel to settle into we spent a bit of time doing some sight seeing at the famous blow holes and the rock bridge at the water front of the ocean. We also went to Middleton Beach and drove right up on the mountain overlooking the harbour giving you a good view of the entrance from the ocean to the ships docking area. Albany had played a major roll in transporting troops to the Middle East at the start of the First World War.

The next day being a Friday, was spent doing the planned setting out of the house in Hare Street with Riet giving me a hand (fancy working during your honeymoon) and catching up with the bricklayers, who would be doing the concrete and brickwork for me. I also met the carpenters and the plumbers and discussed the working program I had in mind and then I went to the Millars timber yard and placed the order for all the timber to be delivered in due course and of course I met up again with the owners of the new house.

After another night’s stay in Albany we decided that it was time to go home and sleep in our own bed again.

On the Sunday morning we went for a cup of coffee in Gosnells and a cup of tea in the afternoon at the Grenville Street to assure both Mums and Dads

that all was well with us and that we were happy to be back at home again and ready to start work.

When I say work I mean work for me, because we had discussed before, that Riet was not going to work any more as we intended to start a family straight away.

CHAPTER 10

MARRIED LIFE

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In the first few weeks Riet spent some time making curtains and doing some gardening at the front of the house while I was flat out with my building activities. In the past, every time that I had come close to finishing a house, I had hired a flat top truck to shift all the scaffolding gear and the shed and site toilet to a following house to be built. It always was a bother to hire a truck just for this purpose, so I thought that I should change to a more suitable means of work vehicle. My eye fell on the Volkswagen one ton pick-up with a decent size tray at the back so that I did not need to hire a truck any more. So I traded the Holden ute in for a Volkswagen pick up and found out quickly that it was a wise move.

We had been married now for two months and Riet was getting bored with nothing much to do as she had been so busy working all her life. The back yard needed a good clean up as for some reason there were a lot of pig melons growing everywhere so seeing that I now had the Volkswagen, we loaded it full with the pig melons on the Sunday morning and then I had to get rid of them somewhere. The Willagee area was only just being subdivided, with roads already made, but no homes being built as yet, so I drove around there looking for a suitable spot to off load my cargo and on a sloping road I dropped the tail gate and driving uphill fast I got rid of the load very easy. Looking in the rear vision mirror it was quite a messy sight with those melons busted open on the road but I got rid of them without being caught in the act.

With all the rubbish gone we spent some time getting the back yard into shape. I thought about putting in a bore and I was advised to put in a system with a pump in the bottom of a stack of well liners as it would work better to push the water up from the bottom than sucking it up from the top.

So the next few weekends I was, with some assistance from family members, sinking the well liners by digging the sand out and using a tripod over the hole to pull the buckets up filled with sand. What a job it was to try and keep the liners straight on top of each other, but we got the job done

and soon we had water available from the bore pump ready to connect to the sprinkler system that I had put in. Following that we put in the grass at the front and the back and gave it plenty of water to get it started.

Riet was getting more and more bored. She was used to being flat out working before the wedding and just could not get used to being at home mostly all by herself as I was very busy working. I had already made two trips to Albany to check up on the progress of the house and a few times Riet mentioned that she wanted to go back to work. I know what the problem really was, she had not fallen pregnant by now and it was not for the lack of trying, I can tell you. We both were the oldest of large families and we both expected that it would be a matter of……you know what I mean, and she would be in the family way. She was talking to her sister Anna one day and asked her if they needed any sewing machine operators at her work and upon making enquiries she was asked to come in for a talk. She did do that and as a result she was given the job and was to start on the next Monday morning. When the next Monday morning came around, she phoned the workplace where Anna was working and informed them that she was not coming to work there as she had just found out that she was PREGNANT. Hooray!!!!!. You know what; all of a sudden she was not bored any more. She had a lot of things to keep herself occupied with now and the pressure was off. From my side it was confirmation that the equipment was working and that was very pleasing.

As I was getting quite busy with work, I spent a lot of money buying the joinery and cupboards for the jobs that I was doing. I thought that it would be a good idea to have my own joinery and cabinet shop. I looked around in the industrial area of Myaree in McCoy Street and various close-by side streets and noticed a sign from a real estate agent (Richards and Co) in Playle Street. In making enquiries I spoke to a Mr. Eric Richards who came out to see me and show me the vacant block that was for sale and discuss the price for the block. The end result was that I bought the block of ½ acre (2000 sq metres in all), for 2,000 pounds.

A few days later I planned to make another trip to the Albany job to take a lot of gear there like all the doors and cupboards for the kitchen, plumbing items and a number of copper and galvanized iron pipes. As these pipes were 20 ft (6m) long, I made some hooks that I had hanging on the right hand side of the Volkswagen pick up as the weight of it would be better on the right hand side to help balance the VW on the road. With all the timber skirting and architraves I had more than a ton on board. I left at 4 o’clock in the morning as I wanted to come back home on the same day. In those days I had picked up smoking regularly and as I knew that I could fall asleep so easy, I also had some chocolate with me. So when I felt that I was getting sleepy I would

light a cigarette and suck on a piece of chocolate alternatively in order to stay awake. That worked OK for a while but when I got past Williams I must have dozed off and when I was drifting off the road to the opposite side, the rough stones on the edge of the road woke me up. Along the other side of the road for a long stretch there was a ditch but for some reason, where I left the road, there was no such ditch but there were at intervals large timber round poles carrying electric wires above. The moment that I opened my eyes I saw this large pole in front coming towards me and with all the strength that I could muster I was able to steer the VW to the left just missing this bloody pole. Now you must visualize the situation that I was in at that very moment. Here I was doing about 100 km per hour with more than a ton on board and this bundle of pipes sticking past the front about one meter on the right hand side. The Volkswagen has the motor under the driver's seat, instead of under a bonnet in front of the cabin so if I had woken up a split second later I would not have been able to swerve to the left in time and the pipes would have got hooked behind the pole and I would have been smashed to pieces into this pole.

I managed to bring the VW back to the correct side of the road and got out shaking all over. I walked around a bit and had a smoke and I started thinking: I just bought a block of land to build a workshop and at home I had a lovely wife, who is just pregnant with our first baby. If I had not just missed that bloody pole, all that would have been lost forever. Boy did I come close to a total disaster! I can assure you that for the rest of the day I did not fall asleep while I was driving. I finished my business in Albany and got home safely by about 9 o'clock in the evening and happy to be home after such an eventful day. It was not until a few months later, well after the Albany home was finished and handed over, that I told Riet about my lucky escape on route to Albany.

My brother Theo was courting a young girl called Lenie, the daughter of the Dutchman Henny Veenvliet, a bricklayer who was doing a fair amount of brickwork for me. Their relationship was flourishing and they expressed a desire to get married although Lenie was only 18 years old. Her father would not allow it as he felt that she was too young at this stage and told them to wait a few years. Both Theo and Lenie would not except this ruling and insisted that they wanted to get married. Both Theo and Henny remained stubborn about their decisions so Theo made it known that he would fix that and he did. Two months later they told the Veenvliets that she was pregnant and made preparations to get married on the 27th of August 1960. Now as you knew from the past, my father was still a staunch Catholic and as Theo was not going to church on a Sunday morning anymore, he ruled that none of the Oorschot family was to attend the wedding of Theo and Lenie. In hindsight I thought that was very hard on the young couple but my Dad was a strong willed person

and my Mum had no chance to voice her opinion. So they got married without the Oorschots being present. I thought that it was a real shame and those two deserved better than that. In hindsight I was sorry that I allowed my father to dictate to me what I was to do in this case.

At home we bought some lounge furniture and when the first television sets became available, we bought one so that Riet could enjoy some entertainment during the day to help her through being by herself while I was always working. It did not take long to get the plans approved by the Melville City Council for my new factory, and you can imagine, that was built in a hell of a hurry as I wanted to buy and install the various wood working machinery such as a bench docker, large buzzer, good size thicknesser and a bandsaw to begin with. I made my selection and ordered all what I wanted from Terry Crommelins machinery in Leederville in readiness for when the workshop was built. It was about July 1960 when the workshop was compl and then I got talking my brother Bill, who finished his apprent ship with Lilleymans and continued working for them, mainly in th workshop. He showed an interest to start me in my workshop a the first thing that he was to build the do bench behind the fi wall of the workshop and a couple of work benches for assemblin the joinery frames. this purpose I bought quite a lot of dry timb to be put in stock for easy access, and we on our way.



Me with baby Terry in the backyard of our home

Riet had been fee well and enjoying her first pregnancy with hiccups and as soon as

the workshop was operational, I used some evening time to make the baby cot, while Riet kept me company in the workshop. It all worked out OK and Riet was happy with the end product. Some months before we had jokingly made an agreement that she was going to name all the boys and I was going to name all the girls and as we both were the oldest of large MIXED families, I thought that was a fair agreement. Then on the evening of the 25th of September Riet was getting the signs that something was going to happen and then the following morning early I took her to King Edward Memorial Hospital in Subiaco.

I had been with Riet every time for her appointments with the Gynaecologist Doctor Love and we had discussed our desire for me to be present with the birth to which he fully agreed. So when Riet was made comfortable in the delivery ward and I wanted to join Riet at her bedside, a big stern looking nurse said that I had to wait in the waiting room and was not allowed in the delivery room.

When Doctor Love turned up later in the morning and confirmed that I was allowed in with my wife, she did not like it a bit, but had to accept the Doctor's ruling. I had no idea of how much pain a woman goes through having a baby and how long it can take. All I could do was to hold her hand and comfort her as she was going through the contractions all day. Finally by about 8 o'clock in the evening her constant suffering paid off and a head appeared followed by a body and our first son was born.

What a relief and what a joy for the both of us. Now Riet could finally relax holding her first baby and she soon forgot all the pain with the knowledge that we now had a family. I can still see this stern looking nurse standing beside the bed when Riet said: "No more babies" and this nurse said: "You will be back next year".

Now that the pressure was off and Riet was made comfortable, she told me that her name selection for our first son would be Terrence Michael, born on the 26th of September 1960. I had a very pleasant duty to fulfill and that was to inform both parents about the arrival of our son. I phoned Gosnells first and I could not help myself as I was very emotional, when I was talking to Riet's Mum. I had a very soft spot for her, because from the beginning she really took a liking to me and then of course I phoned my own Mum and Dad with the exciting news. The telephone booth was right in front of the main entrance of the hospital and I think it was there for a good reason. I went back inside and found Riet had been taken to the maternity ward and was looking forward to a good night's sleep and so was I as a matter of fact.

A week later Riet and baby Terry came home from the hospital and a very busy time started for Riet, attending the feeding and washing that goes with

newborn babies and running the household with shopping and the likes at the same time.

Having Bill working in the workshop I naturally had lots of conversations with him and then he informed me that he was planning to get married with his girlfriend Rikie ten Beumer, whom he had know for some time. The wedding date was set for the 11th of February 1961. Also because I did not have a dust extractor system connected to all the machinery, unlike the Lilleymans factory, there was a lot of sawdust floating in the air inside the workshop and it started to affect Bill, who unbeknown to me, was a bit asthmatic. The end result was that he could not handle the dust situation in the factory and had no option but to hand in his notice. It was a real shame as we got on so well and while Bill was there he was really putting in a good effort and he had been well trained at Lilleymans.

Fortunately for me, my brother Theo, when he heard that Bill was going to leave, showed interest in taking over the job at the workshop and as the future would prove, that was the best thing to happen for the success of the workshop. I already had put plans into the Melville Council for the building of the office on the right hand side of the workshop, which was needed for the proper running of my business. It did not take long to build the office with toilet facilities and a storeroom behind it and a large gate between both buildings to provide some sort of security.

As I was always on the lookout for more work, I kept an eye on the tender column in the West Australian and I noticed that a certain Architect by the name of Hans Bollig, was calling for builders to tender for a contemporary house in Windfield Road in Melville. I applied for and got the job to build it. What was attractive in this house was that it had a lot of large timber windows which meant plenty of work for the workshop. The contact with Hans Bollig resulted in a lot more work as he was impressed with the way that I started and then quickly finished the job on hand. I felt that the only way to make money was to get in and then get out fast.

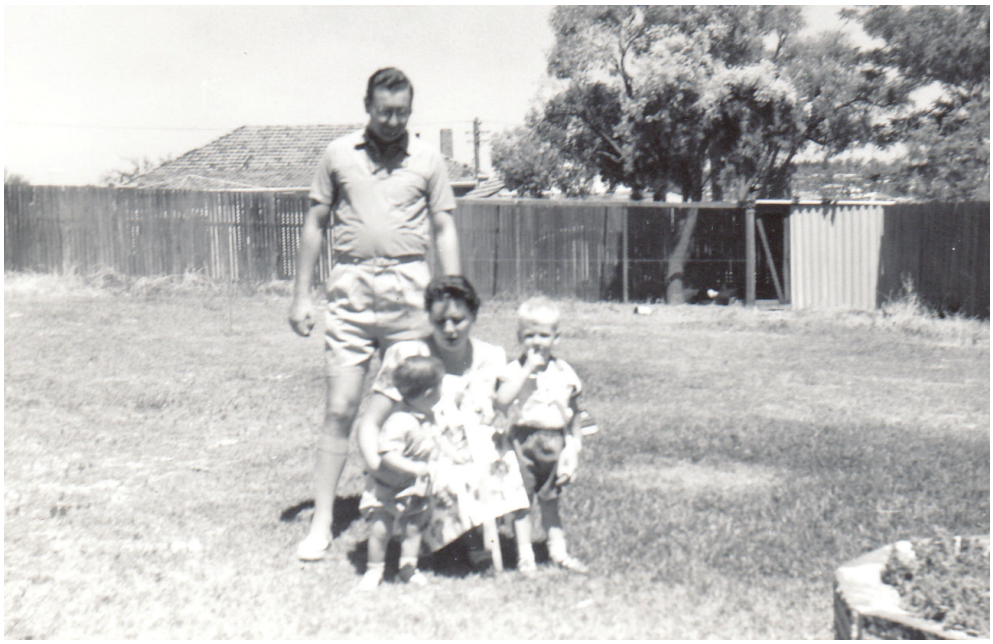
I also decided that I could do better by carting the bricks for our jobs ourselves, so I bought my first truck, a Ford F700 and I employed a truck driver Jack Vermeulen who lived in Grenville Street just past our parent's home. I had a Dutch plasterer doing all my plastering jobs and his name was Jan Grooten. He was a big bloke with reddish hair and was very friendly and one day he called in at the workshop at about lunch time. Often, if I was near the workshop at that time, I would just walk across over the vacant land to North Lake Road and have lunch with Riet. On this particular day Theo told him that I had gone home for lunch, so he drove around and knocked at the door. Now my front door had a glass side light and as I was in the bedroom

at that very moment it took a minute or so for me to answer the knock on the door as I was pulling up my pants. Through the glass side light he must have noticed what I was doing and when I opened the door there was Jan Grooten standing with a face as red as a beetroot because he felt embarrassed. The good thing was that I did not feel embarrassed by being caught out.

.At home everything was going well with the baby and it was at the end of January 1961, just before Bill got married that Riet made it known to me that she was in the family way again which in a way was really not a surprise at all, looking at the example that both our parents set for us. We were both very happy about it and so were our parents. Talking about babies, Theo and Lenie were blessed with twin girls on the 30th January 1961 and that was a surprise as you can well imagine. My Dad was so taken by the arrival of the twins that he buried the hatchet with Theo and made peace and visited the new arrivals. I was very glad about that.

Hans Bollig asked me if I could be interested in building a large doctor's residence on West Coast Highway in Scarborough. It was apparently a very difficult block as it went up very steep from the Highway and the sand was like beach sand, very loose. After I made an inspection of the site, I realized that, if I could enter the site from Hastings Street at the back and make a drive from old timber sleepers, it could be done. In my price calculations I allowed plenty to cover myself plus a good profit to make it worthwhile and I got the job for a fantastic price. There was a lot of black butt paneled ceilings and floors to match and at the end the Doctor was more than pleased, and so was I. I made good money on this one.

As I was working on site a lot during the day and doing my quoting for jobs and my book keeping at night I was getting very tired. Dad had been going around selling his Watkins products door to door and knowing, that before leaving Holland to emigrate to Australia, he had done a book keeping course, I thought that he may jump at the opportunity to work in my office attending to the book keeping and do any other running around as needed. So I suggested this to him and he did not hesitate one moment to give me a YES. He needed to tidy things up on his Watkins round and was very happy to start at the beginning of the following month. In the workshop with, Theo's input, a proper dust extraction system was installed and he designed and built just behind the store room, a large timber bin structure with a flap on the side allowing the dust to be discharged into our Ford truck ready for dumping at the tip. Then I got a tip from someone that at the Saint John of God Hospital in Subiaco, where I used to work before, they had an incinerator and would like the saw dust delivered at a price so that was a much better solution that having to pay the tip for dumping it there.



Riet and myself with Terry and Jeff in the backyard of North Lake Road house.

From the day that we got married we had been attending Sunday Mass in Myaree. The only thing was that they had no church there yet so the local Irish priest, Father Mullins was saying the Sunday Mass at various people's homes in the parish. He himself was living in a moderate home near the corner of Evershed Street and Marmion Street. A large block surrounded by North Lake Road, Marmion Street and Evershed Street belonged to the Catholic Church and talking to Father Mullins one day he expressed the desire to build a school on the part of the land that faces Evershed street and then this school could then also be used as a church on the Sunday. This building facing Evershed Street was a lot safer for school kids than the other two very busy streets.

Somebody in the parish designed the school building with two good size classrooms with a set of floor to ceiling folding doors that could be opened for the Sunday Services and even could be used for any school functions or dance evenings.

Approval and finance was received from the Church Office in Perth and I was given the job to proceed with the building. Again the fact that I had my own joinery shop and as the timber windows of the class rooms were quite big, it did not have to rely on others to supply the joinery in time. Over the years I found that having my own workshop prevented a lot of delays that other builders had to live with. I think that the word is that I became self-sufficient and it saved me a lot of time. On completion there was an official opening by the Archbishop and unbeknown to me Father Mullins had organized a marble



My first three storey job in Como.

plaque at the front elevation of the school with my name on it as the builder. I only found out recently that much later when planning a new design for an extended school development that the first building was demolished as it did not fit into the new design.

I kept up my studies in order to get my own builder's registration ticket and at the end I passed all the exams and received my Certificate of Registration. As a result of this John Saunders was no longer required to be a Director of my Company and he resigned and Riet was installed as a Director/Secretary in his place. I was very thankful of John's original offer to help me out when I formed the Company, so I stayed on as a customer of J & W Bateman, with John Saunders looking after my requirements for many years.

I have talked about trying to becoming more self-sufficient and in the building industry there were always a lot of steel items required such as steel columns, steel angle irons for lintels, steel beams and often steel balustrade, so I thought of having my own steel shop.

There were always delays in getting steel items delivered on site so supplying my own would certainly improve that situation. Behind the workshop there was still some unused land up to the rear boundary so for the full width of the block with parapet walls around the back and both sides and a big sliding galvanized iron door at the front of it, I built my steel shop. In it I bought a large steel cropping machine in order to cut off the angle irons and for punching holes in steel, a very useful machine and a real time saver.

I also bought a steel c
docker with a tungsten tipped
steel blade. This machine
ated at a very high speed a
cutting was very deafening
certainly did a great job.
the Steelshop became opera-
tional, Sjaak Verschuren from
Goomalling, whom I had got
to know a few years befo
interested to start working t
as he was familiar with w
and steel works.


Harold Krantz, the Architect.

In the meantime at ho
few things were happening.
of all Riet had been prog
well with her pregnancy. Dr
was very happy with her an
predicted that early Septembe
would be the expected date for
the confinement. Also before that
she had been troubled by bad teeth, probably as a result of the poor and little available food during the war years as she was growing up and the Dentist in Fremantle advised her to have the whole lot taken out in stages and have her fitted with a set of dentures. She decided to do that as she could not see herself going back to him for any length of time to continually fix up her teeth. Another thing that she did, leading up the time of the birth of our second baby, was to get her drivers license which would give her some independence and it certainly would come in very handy.

On the morning of the 11th of September 1961 Riet thought that her time had come and I rushed her over to King Edward Hospital in Subiaco. I had no trouble driving there as the route was now well known to me. As soon as we got there and Riet was taken to the delivery ward, the same stern looking nurse was there too, but this time she remembered me and I was given a special hospital gown to put over my clothes and I was allowed to stay with Riet from the start. With Terry it took all day but this time the baby came in a matter of a few hours, which was a relief for Riet. Soon the baby was laid in her arms after we were told that it was another boy. Riet had already chosen his name and told me there and then that he would be called Jeffrey David. I thought, give it time and I will get my chance to do the naming of our first girl, when she

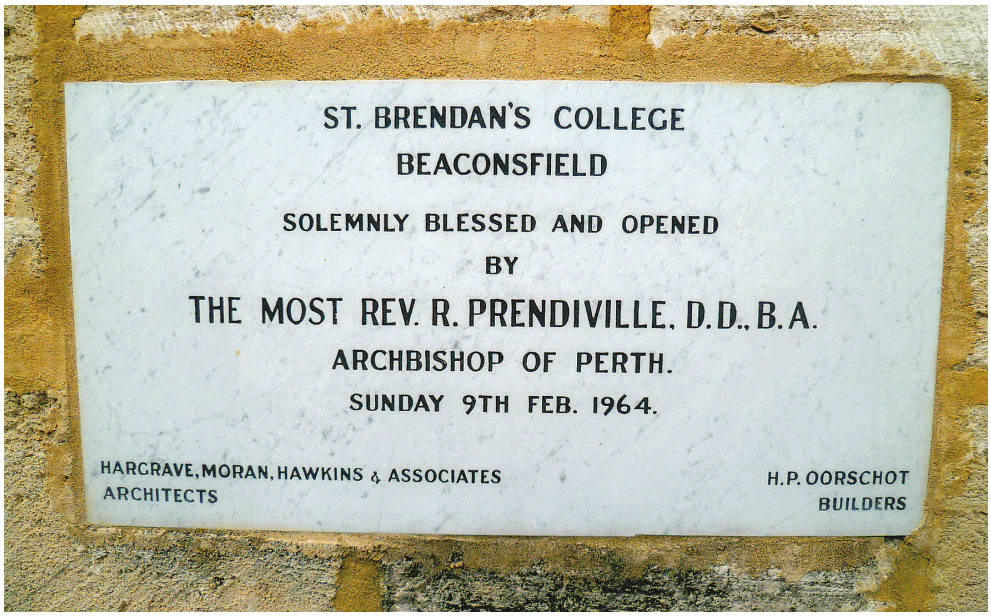
would come along in the future. I had not told anybody yet what my choice for the first girl would be and I was going to keep it a secret at this stage. My selection would be Margaret Maria. The Doctor was very happy with mother and son and again I made the good news phone calls to the grandparents.

My Dad settled in well into the office and was really happy working with Theo and me making sure that the workshop and jobs ran smoothly. Blue was the company colour and my Ford F700 truck was painted blue on the tip body with the name OORSCHOT in yellow letters painted on either side and the back. This of course helped in getting my name more known around the place and I considered it as good advertising. My brother Bert finished his schooldays just before Christmas at the end of 1961 and as he had seen some of his brothers working in the building trade, he expressed a desire to follow suit and was interested to start an apprenticeship with me so I started him off with Theo in the workshop. He became my second apprentice as I already had employed Eddy (I can't remember his surname) with Theo some months before. One day a fellow by the name of Arie Verhagen, (with a name like that he had to be a Dutchman), called in and made himself known as a builder who was looking for someone to make his joinery. He did a lot of work for the Public Works Department (PWD) in the country and at that stage he had won a tender to build a school in Goomalling past Northam. Classrooms always had large timber window frames with plenty of opening whitco sashes in those days and that represented a lot of work for us and needless to say, we finished up doing a lot of business with Arie Verhagen and his son Cor.

I remember taking a load of joinery to the Goomalling school job on a Saturday morning on my Volkswagen pick-up truck, when I was approaching Northam. I had heard that they had recently built a large open air swimming pool along the main road leading up to the town, so naturally I kept an eye on the right hand side of the road and as I passed it I admired what I saw. What I did not see was that someone had changed the speed limit sign from 40 miles/hr to 30 miles/hr. I was stopped just past the swimming pool by the local police in grey uniforms and was told that I was speeding. I said that I was doing the correct speed of 40 miles and then I was informed that they had changed the sign to 30 miles only yesterday and I was THE FIRST BASTARD THAT WAS GOING TO PAY FOR IT.

They were exactly their words at that time. You can imagine that I was livid as they thought that it was a great joke and made fun of giving me the infringement notice on the spot. The fact that they were really enjoying this, made me not to forget this incident ever. I still call them the Grey Ghosts.

West Australia was getting all exited with the Commonwealth Games to be held at the end of 1962 in fact from 22nd of November till the 1st of



His plaque speaks for it self.

December. The athletics events would be held at the Perry Lakes Stadium in Floreat Park and all the swimming events at the Beatty Park Aquatic Centre at the corner of Charles Street and Vincent Street in North Perth. In order to house all the competitors with their support staff and the organizers and officials, the State Government came up with the idea to build a village of standard type housing nearby in Floreat Park, on land that was still vacant, to accommodate everyone. After the Commonwealth Games were over, these houses would be sold off to recoup the cost of building them and at the same time the accommodation in the village was very near the sporting venue.

I was always watching the tender columns in The West Australian newspapers and just before Christmas in 1961 I saw a notice by the architects Cameron Chisholm and Nichols who were calling for builders to register to tender for groups of houses to be built at the Commonwealth Games Village in Floreat Park.

I reacted to that immediately and got Dad to pick up the plans and specifications for a group of 9 houses. I was keen to get the chance to win the tender of a group of nine so I spent a lot of time over the holiday period doing my sums. What was interesting to see was that all nine houses were of the same design, although four were reversed. When I made an inspection of the site, I realized that the ground was very soft sand and that, when digging the footings, the sand would not stand up on the sides so the footings needed to be planked. Also the houses were not alongside of each other but were spread out through a number of streets. In the design of the village that was a good thing,



St. Brendan's College shortly after completion.

because if they wanted to sell them off later on, there would be a variety of designs all mixed up in the street. Also the design was just a rectangular shape with a reinforced concrete ring beam over the outside cavity wall all around.

As I was doing the pricing, I could imagine myself getting the job, but to make a success of it, I needed to be there working on the tools full time setting the pace. The tenders closed mid January 1962 and I delivered the tender documents at the architect's office myself.

I waited for the outcome, as it was customary for the architect to open all the tenders in front of all the builders present, and then I found out that I was successful in the group that I had tendered for. In order to save time the plans had already been submitted by the architects to the Council, so work could start almost straightaway and that suited me. I was itching to get started as I did not have all that much work going at that moment.

I had the young apprentice Eddy with me who lived in Myaree and a labourer and we were off to a flying start. Most contracts in the Games Village, as it was called in short, were for groups of nine homes and I was the first one to start there and the first one to start handing them over to the supervisor. Now the arrangement with the State Government was that the supervision of the whole project was going to be done by the State Housing Commission and that worked out fine as they were on site all the time. I made good money on this project and when it was completed, after being so flat out, I was anxious to pick up more work.

Opposite the school church in Evershed Street I noticed a For Sale sign on a vacant block by Richards & Co and after enquiries for the details I decided to buy the block and build a spec home on it, just to create some work and then sell it upon completion. Also I had my eye on the block next to the workshop with the thought of building a new home for ourselves as I suspected that our family would increase in size in the years to come. Just after I bought this block, which was facing Prosser Way, Riet found out that she was in the family way again and number three was expected to arrive in May next year, being 1963.

I thought that this one was surely going to be my first girl as it looked like I was following my Dad's pattern of two boys first and then two girls. With this knowledge I went ahead with the design of our new home and as the block was sloping down to the right I planned a large undercroft garage on the right hand side with two double size garage doors. It would be a lot more spacious than the North Lake Road home with a good size lounge and a big kitchen/ dining room on the left and main entrance and good size bathroom in the centre and four bigger than usual bedrooms on the right hand side partly over the 4 car garage.

I made an immediate start on the building of it as I wanted to move in, well before number three would be arriving. I also bought a new Holden station wagon for Riet as that would give her a lot more independence with the kids. I had made a lot more joinery for Arie Verhagen and he noticed the house next to the office nearing completion and then he found out from Theo that it was Henk's new home.

He asked what Henk was going to do with the house in North Lake Road and said that he would be interested in renting it, and that was what happened. He became a tenant in the North Lake Road home.

It became a constant drive to get more houses to build and as I was driving around I noticed that a number of three storey buildings were being built, meaning a lot more work concentrated in only one contract with a much bigger mount of money involved. I started to keep an eye on the tender columns in particular for three storey projects and I got Dad to pick up all those that were on offer. It meant a lot more evening work for me to calculate the tender prices and in doing so, I got into a sort of routine in the pricing process. After missing out on a few tenders I finally got lucky and won my first three storey job of nine units on the corner of Labouchere Road and Saunders Street in Como. The Architects were Krantz and Sheldon and the owners were Mr. & Mrs. Ptak. When I told Riet that I had won the tender, she was all worried and said that I had never done this sort of work before but I pointed out that it was just three houses on top of each other, no problem.

I met the Architect Mr. Harold Krantz to sign the contract and at that time I did not know that this would be the start of a long business relationship. Then before I started to set out the job on-site they asked me to come into their office at 105 St. Georges Terrace to discuss extending the project to 15 units which was gladly accepted by me. I was pleased that al the windows were in timber and there was a lot of timber door frames and of course the kitchen cupboards and wardrobes that were very welcome for the workshop.

Theo had full control of the workshop and he was doing a good job in organizing all the workers and doing a lot of work himself. It was time that we invested some money in more equipment like a spindle moulder, an 8ft x 4ft door press and instead of electric drills, a change to air drills and other air driven tools.

Also I had to keep up the supply of dry jarrah timber which would be more economically bought in large quantities direct from the timber mills, so I made enquiries and came up with name of Ryan and Ryan Timber Mills in Cowarramup near Margaret River down south. I paid a visit there and bought various full stacks of timber at much better prices than in Perth.

I was able to arrange with an owner/driver, who had a semi-trailer, to pick up the stacks for me and bring them to the workshop where they were stacked up between the large dust bin and the steel shop at the back. All that I needed to do was to keep them covered over with sheets of corrugated iron to protect them from the sun. Another problem that was coming up was the parking of cars in front of the workshop with the increase of workers, so as the ½ acre block on the left of the workshop became advertised for sale, I quickly snapped it up as it had a shed already on it and this would be ideal for storing dry timber inside of it, plus the fact that I could create some more parking space for the workers.

We are by now in the beginning of 1963 and the Ptak flats were nearing completion, so I looked in the paper and I noticed an Architect by the name of L.W. Buckeridge in West Perth, was calling for builders to register their name for the construction of 21 units on the corner of Onslow Street and Riverview Street in South Perth. I phoned and spoke to Len Buckeridge and after talking to him he invited me to pick up the plans and species and to submit a tender. So Dad went to pick up all the documents and I got to work at night at home until late as I was determined to get this one. The thing in my advantage was that I worked fulltime on site speeding things up, doing the formwork myself with on site labourers even doing the scaffolding ourselves and at this stage I was still hiring all this equipment.

I made a point of not working on Sundays as I wanted to spend some time with my growing family and talking of growing family, Riet was about to give

birth of what I was sure to be my long over due Margaret Maria. In the early morning of the 24th of May 1963, I rushed her into King Edward Hospital in Subiaco for the long awaited moment and it did not take long for me to find out that we had again a son added to our family. At the birth, when I saw that it was a boy, I can't deny that I was disappointed, but I soon got over that. He was covered in some white muck and weighing over 8 pounds, but he was all complete and according to Dr. Love, he was very healthy and so was Riet. She came through this like a champion and was keen to tell me that his name would be Kevin John and I loved her for it.

I told you before about my best friend Henk Werven and wife Herma with their three children. He was still doing all the painting on all my jobs and for some other people as well and he was earning good money for his family. Then he told me one day that he was going to buy a block of land and he wanted me to build his house for him in the Innaloo area. He was all excited because this was the biggest thing he would be undertaking and he made arrangements with the Dutch Building Society for a mortgage.

The plans were drawn up and it would be a nice comfortable home. When the approvals for building came through I made a quick start and every Sunday they came around looking at the progress on the job. I remember as if it were yesterday, that Herma phoned me one evening all crying that Henk was in hospital and that he had been diagnosed with lung cancer. I was shocked and could not believe it at first and then I remember how I had noticed him smoking, rolling his own cigarettes from heavy Turkish tobacco and coughing a lot.

I visited him in hospital and saw that he looked terrible in such a short time. I think that he knew what the outcome would be for him and he was naturally worried about the future of his family. The brickwork on his house was just completed that week and the roofing timbers were on order to be delivered in a few days time. I needed to talk to Herma and arranged to speak to both of them on the next day at the hospital. I had been thinking of what way I could help them in their situation and I would have to talk to the people at the Dutch Building Society who of course knew me by now from our past business relationship. When we got together at the hospital to discuss what to do next, I explained what I had found out from the Dutch Building Society. In situations like this, as Henk would not be able to earn an income resulting from his serious illness, and therefore would not be able to make mortgage payments, I would be instructed to stop any more building work on the house. Then the unfinished home would be put up for auction and Henk and Herma would most likely get nothing back at all. Someone would finish up getting a bargain at the expense of Henk and Herma. Not a very nice thought. So I suggested to the both of them that they agree to sign over the ownership of



Corner of Onslow and Riverview Street South Perth.

the unfinished home into my personal name with the sanction of the Dutch Building Society and then let me complete the home.

I would then sell the home, deduct what I had spent to complete it and send the leftover money to Herma. I had already been told by them that they wanted to go back to Holland as soon as possible while Henk could still travel. Herma had a sister in Heerlen in Limburg in the South of Holland and she was very close to her and she would support them in any way she could. Another thing that came to light at this discussion in the hospital was that they both kept their Dutch Nationality and they knew that the Social Services in Holland were a lot better than here in Australia. Henk and Herma would just have to trust me in doing the right thing for them and they did not doubt that at all.

The paper work was prepared for this action to be formulated and then signed by all parties concerned. On a personal note I immediately stopped smoking as this happening with Henk really scared the shit out of me. Henk and Herma had a lot of furniture and personal belongings that they could not take along on the plane back to Holland. So on the last Sunday before their flight back to Holland, with the aid of the Sunday Times, who dedicated half of the front page of Sunday's issue to this sad happening telling Henk's story, while at the same time advising the public of the auction to be held at 11 o'clock that morning at the rental place where Henk and Herma were living.

I conducted the auction and had plenty of helpers to assist me and collect the moneys as the auction progressed. I was appalled at the amount of bargain hunters that were around with no appreciation of the circumstances.

As a result though there was plenty of money to pay for the airfares and some to spare for them to take along. When we saw them off at the airport, there were a lot of people there wishing them the best and letting Henk and Herma and their kids know that they had made a lot of friends, while they were living and working in Perth. It became evident that Henk was well respected for what he was. After the house was completed it did not take long to sell as it was an appealing design that attracted a good lot of interest and it was sold within a fortnight for a good price.

After deducting expenditure for completing their house, I was able to send to Herma in Heerlen a substantial amount of money. Henk had lasted only six more weeks in Holland while they were staying with Herma's sister and when she received the surplus from the house sale, she informed me, with a lot of thanks and gratitude, that she was now able to buy a duplex half for cash, not far from her sister's place. She was ready to settle down in peace and look after her kids as Henk had wanted her to do anyway. To me it was a hell of a good feeling to be able to help out my best friend in need.

With the start of my first three storey job, I looked into buying a hoist to bring up the bricks and mortar to the first and second floors. Sandovers machinery department were agents for the Devlaco model that would carry a fully loaded wheelbarrow with ease. They also would supply hoist tower extensions to suit this model. I bought one for the Ptak Flats job and the hoist could be moved behind any ute like a trailer but it was a lot longer and it had normal car wheels. You could buy them with either petrol or electric motors and I went for the electric one. All I had to do was organize a three phase power pole on the job as the motor was a three phase one. The tender for the Buckeridge job in South Perth closed in March 1963 and guess what? I was the lowest tender.

Dad went to deliver my tender document and when he came back he was very excited as I was as well. Dad being Dad as I knew him had been a nervous man all of his life and he understood that the success of my business hinged on getting work coming in all the time. When the tender had to be presented to the Architect on the closing day, Dad could not get any food through his throat because he was so nervous.

I remember having Dad in my car with me going somewhere and he showed me his legs and ankles how they were all swollen and he was worried about it. This was a sign that his kidneys were not working properly. I mentioned before that even back in Holland he was taking these roter tablets that his Dutch doctor friends kept on supplying him with, in order to kill the acid in his stomach that was giving him continual heartburn. It was getting him down although he was seeing a doctor here about it.



Here I am wishing Henk Werven all the best at the airport before his flight back to Holland with his family

The Church Office must have been impressed with the school-church in Myaree as they made my name know to the Architects, (Hargrave, Moran, Hawkins & Associates), who were designing the High School to be named Saint Brendan in York Street, Beaconsfield.

The project was to be built in many stages. First stage was to be the single storey living quarters for the religious staff and the double storey, four class-room school building. With the single storey I had to construct a large brick septic tank that would also serve the school building.



Park Avenue in Nedlands near Steve's Bar.

The reason that I am telling you this here in this book is that I came across a problem that had not been expected. When the small backhoe operator was digging the hole for the septic tank, he came across a large solid limestone rock pinnacle that could not be moved no matter how hard he tried. I was still doing business with J & W Bateman and their Fremantle shop was not far away. I knew that as a builder I was able to buy jelly sticks with detonators and fuse and I had learned at Hill 50 in Mount Magnet, on how to go about blasting. So I was soon drilling some holes around the bottom of this pinnacle and getting ready to set up the blasting exercise.

I was really enjoying doing this and with a few workers on site as spectators, I put a match to the fuse and got out of the hole using the ladder that was left in position. We were watching at a safe distance and waited and after about 15 minutes I was wondering what went wrong. I wanted to go back and check up but the others said to wait a bit longer. After another 10 minutes I went back in the hole as I realized that some thing was not right. And yes the fuse stopped burning about one foot short of the detonator. I looked at it and decided to light the last bit of fuse and then up the ladder as fast as I could. I never climbed a ladder so fast before but it paid off as I was well out of range when the explosion rocked the neighbourhood.

When I got home that night I put the jelly in a plastic bag and I knew it had to be kept in the refrigerator for safe keeping. Riet did not like it but I just wanted to hang onto it as I thought that it might come in handy one day.

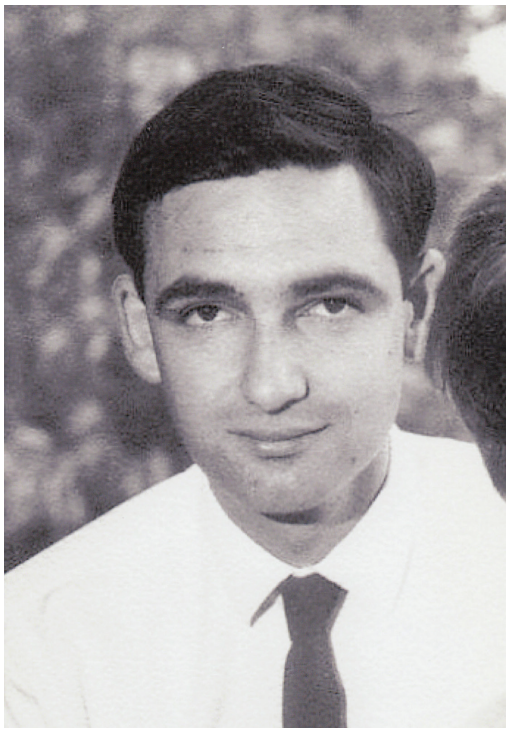


33 units near the end of William Street Mt. Lawley.

I suppose that because of all the Catholic related building work that I was doing, an organization known as the Knights of the Southern Cross, contacted me and made an appointment for two gentlemen to come and talk to me at our home one evening. I sounded all very secretive but I was willing to listen to what they were explaining to the both of us. They told us that they were comparable to the Freemasons Organization with the one big difference that the Knights of the Southern Cross were only for, and for the benefit of, prominent Catholic people. It sounded all very interesting and I thought that it could help me if I ever needed help in the future, so I joined and became a member of the Knights of the Southern Cross.

I picked up another three story block of 9 two bedroom units in Nedlands near Steve's Bar from the Architects Krantz and Sheldon. These were built on the corner of Broadway and The Avenue and were to be called "Park Avenue". The Architects seemed very pleased with my performance and continuity of work is what I needed, so as usual we got stuck into the next project. By this time I also switched from hiring scaffolding to buying and the same with all the formwork for the concrete slabs. Also the one truck that I bought some time ago was not enough to do all the work of carting the bricks and all this equipment from job to the yard and then again to the next job, so I decided to buy two 8 ton International Harvester diesel tip trucks and had the tip body painted blue with the name OORSCHOT in yellow as I had done before. But of course these trucks don't go by themselves so I needed more truck drivers.

I already had a Dutchman, Kees Heerema, who was living in Armadale, working for me as a truck driver and he introduced me to his son in law, Nick Berkelaar. They belonged to the Dutch Reformed Church and turned out



David Krantz, the Architect.

to be very reliable and trustworthy. He also introduced me to another man from the same church named Jan Smith. Because they were living in Armadale it was in advantage as they would take the truck home and then the next morning they would be well on the way to Byford, where the brick yard was, to pick up more bricks for the jobs. The size of these truck tip bodies were designed to carry 2000 standard size bricks and they were put on by hand with help of some brickyard workers but the truck drivers had to unload them by hand on their own on the job. If there were no delays during the day a truck driver could pick up and deliver 6000 bricks in one day but he would be doing more than 8 hours work.

I got another job in Nedlands from Krantz and Sheldon and that was a double storey job along the Stirling Highway. It consisted of two buildings facing each other with the parking area in between the two buildings. Each building contained eight double storey units and they all had their own internal steel and wooden staircase leading to their first floor. This project was different to what I had done before because all the external brickwork was done in red clinker brick with the mortar hanging out. The bricklayers hated it because they were so used to scraping the mortar, which squeezes out from underneath the brick, with the trowel away but in this case the mortar was to be left hanging out to harden. This job got code named very quickly as the "snotty brick job".

This development was classed as a set of up markets villas and they were rented out as such when finished.

At home Riet was busy looking after three very young children with the constant washing of nappies and all the other washing of bed linen and other clothes and cooking the meals for us all. It just never stopped, with all the feeding one after the other, I can tell you she was flat out and when the kids were finally in bed at night she was just worn out and looking for a good night's sleep herself and that was well earned. You know she never complained



Our Dad when he died in July 1964.

because she just loved th
and I loved her for it.

The kids could not ha
better mother and I coul
have a better wife. It ma
very happy and it motivate
me more to provide for t
must tell you of this part
incident. It was a custom
Sunday for Riet to take t
older boys with her to M
the school/church while I
an eye on Kevin who ha
started to crawl and walk
he would happily stand inside
the front lounge window wa
for Mum to return from chu
Now I was not a hero for cle
baby's dirty nappies and Kevin
sort of made me realize that he
was having a problem so I told
him just to wait until Mum was back shortly and just kept an eye on him in case he was losing some of his droppings.

When Riet got home and I mentioned Kevin's predicament, I surely copped it and I suppose, rightly so! She said: "You should have cleaned him up instead of waiting for me to do it". I sort of said that you were so used to it and I was not.

It was about the end of February 1964 that Riet informed me that it was on again and that she was pregnant. A visit to Dr. Love in West Perth confirmed her own diagnosis and we would be looking for an October baby. Everything was going well and it seemed that she was thriving on motherhood. In his words she was a natural mother and I should be very proud of her and I can assure you, I was. I could not be happier and so was Riet.

My Dad was getting more worried about his swollen feet and legs and saw the doctor more often. The doctor thought that not much could be done for him and gave him additional medication and advised him to forget about the roter tablets as well as advise to drink more milk instead. Dad also got tired more easily and that showed in the office.

In January I won the contract with Architects Krantz and Sheldon to build a three storey block of 33 units near the end of William Street and corner of

Forrest Street in Mt. Lawley. It would be ready to start the following month. It was a good size project and I was glad to have won the tender for it. I was getting on very well with both Harold Krantz and his son David. As usual I kept on working on the jobs myself most of the time. Nobody got a chance to slacken off on the job as I kept on setting the pace.

The design was in the form of a U shape with five units in the middle and then three units on each end, square on the middle ones forming the U shape making it 11 units per floor. In order to keep the bricklayers on the job full time I started them off at the three units on the left and then while they were doing the five units in the middle, I started doing the formwork for the concrete slabs of the first three units. This way there was continual work going on in a sequence of activities with the result of fast progress.

While all this was going on my Dad got worse and ended up in the Royal Perth Hospital where they tried to improve his situation. On the way home to Myaree I called in every late afternoon and just had a talk to him to keep up his spirits and to keep him in touch with what we were doing, keeping in mind that for the last few years he had been a part of my building activity. Mum had a hard time with Dad's turn for the worst and she naturally worried a lot about him, after all they had been through so much together since their married life started in Leiden in Holland.

I promised to bring him a pair of binoculars so that he could, as his room was on the North side of the hospital and seven floors up, see us working on the form work on the job in Williams Street. I would every half hour stand up on the formwork and then look in the direction of the hospital, which was well visible, and then wave with both my arms knowing that Dad could be looking in the direction of the job. Then on the way home, calling in to see him, we would have something to talk about and he was happy and he got other patients in the same ward to join him in looking at us working on the job. I then also informed him that he was going to be a grandfather again.

The job progressed well as usual and then on one of my visits to the Architect's office, David Krantz told me all about his great interest in the load bearing brick construction method that he was pioneering in W.A. He apparently had spent some time in South Africa where this concept was already being used. The bricks were not made from clay but from shale and the Cardup Brick Company in Byford were starting to experiment with them at this time. These bricks were harder than concrete under pressure and while in the past, any multi storey buildings were constructed in vertical concrete, now this could be done in load bearing brick. These were engineered designs by the partner Mr. Sheldon of the Architectural firm. David asked me if I would be interested in tendering for the first 9 storey that was now in the design stage and to be built

along Mill Point Road in South Perth opposite the Zoo. The fact that he asked me must mean that he thought that I was well capable of doing it.

I was very happy about all this and of course so was Theo and Dad. In the office I had to make an important decision as it was on the cards that Dad would not be coming out of hospital and the office work was being neglected at this stage. After advertising I took on a young man with accountancy qualifications that seemed suited for the job.

His name was Jim Sutherland and he got stuck into the back log that was created by Dad's absence from the office. He seemed to work in all right with Theo and the girl that also had been working in the office for a while.

Some time before, we had taken on an Italian cabinetmaker with blond curly hair. Most Italians that I have met always had black hair but this fellow came from the very northern part of Italy with blond hair. His name was Auro Stazzonelli. He turned out to be a top tradesman and he was taught by his father who had his own business near Fremantle. I took him on when we landed the first units for Mr. Ptak in Como and because of the amount of cupboards wanted for the various jobs we had to extend the joinery workshop just about up to the steel shop at the very back just to accommodate the cabinet making section. Soon he needed an apprentice to help him along.

I had found out a long time ago that buying timber in large quantities was a lot more economical and as we were going through a lot of nyatoh boards 12 inch X 1 inch, mainly for the overhead cupboards I ordered a full truck load every time. The shed on the block next door would come in handy for storing it but it would be a big job to offload a truck-full by hand, so as I was a good customer with William Adams, the steel merchants in O'Connor, I could borrow one of their bigger forklifts for a few hours.

All I had to do was drive it over the road to Myaree and bring it back afterwards, and I did. It saved a lot of time and labour. The job in Williams Street was progressing well, all the subcontractors such as plasterers, plumbers and electricians were all pulling their weight and it looked like that the job would be handed over at the specified time.

What was not going well at all was Dad's health in the Royal Perth Hospital. I spent some regular time there with Mum and on one of these visits, Dad said that the last three years that he had been working for me, had been the happiest years of his life. I suppose being part of a business that was growing and doing so well would have been something to feel really good about. What was such a shame was that he was not going to be part of that much longer. Mum came to me afterwards and said that the Chinese Doctor, which was looking after Dad, thought that circumcising him could improve his health somewhat and Mum was shocked and upset about it as the doctor wanted

Mum to go along with that. Of course Mum objected to that strongly and that was the end of that. I still could not believe this suggestion from this Doctor and I saw it as nothing more than an experiment on a dying man. And that he was. Most of us were in the hospital on the 12th of July to support Mum in this difficult time of saying goodbye to the man in her life with whom she was willing to go, to start a new life in a strange and new country that she had a lot of trouble adjusting to at the beginning. My Dad's had father died at the age of thirty seven in Holland and now he was gone at the age of fifty four. Not fair really as there was to be so much enjoyment ahead of him with the business and the ever increasing amount of grandchildren.

The funeral was on the 15th of July at Karrakatta with a lot of people paying their last respects. He knew a lot of people in the Dutch Community and now also through my business. He would be sadly missed for a long time by many and particularly by Mum and our family. It had appeared that the long use of those roter tablets, supplied by his Dutch doctor friends, had eventually poisoned his kidneys with the devastating results that we now had to live with.

As was expected, tenders were called by Krantz and Sheldon in late August for the nine storey load bearing brick building containing 52 units at Mill Point Road. The plans and specifications with a bill of quantities were available and I picked them up myself. The bill of quantities had been used before on larger projects and it meant that all the quantities of everything in the building were calculated by the Architect's office and all I had to do was work out the rates that I was going to apply to each item. This method made it easier to calculate any variations that could occur on the job.

Knowing what was ahead of us, in consultation with our accountants in West Perth, there was a need to reconstruct the set up of the Company. After lengthy discussions the outcome was that it would be wise, for taxation purposes, to create a holding Company named OORSCHOT PROPERTIES Pty. Ltd. owning all of the following subsidiaries being:

1. OORSCHOT BUILDERS Pty. Ltd. carrying out all the contract construction work on site,
2. OORSCHOT HOMES Pty. Ltd. covering all the work in the joinery and cabinet shop,
3. OORSCHOT STEEL Pty Ltd. to cover all the activity in the present steel shop and any possible future expansion in that direction.
4. OORSCHOT TRANSPORT Pty. Ltd. As we already had three trucks in operation and I was toying with the idea to buy a front end loader, there was need for the formation of this Company in the group.

It was noted here that if in the future I was to engage in the construction of any buildings for resale, they would be accommodated in a fifth company

to be called OORSCHOT DEVELOPMENTS Pty. Ltd. under the Holding Company. After discussing this with all the Directors, being nobody else than the Company/Secretary (my wife Riet) and myself, we put this transformation of our business into motion and everything went ahead as normal as if there were no changes made at all.

In the meantime everything at home went like clockwork. The kids were doing well, Riet was happily growing in size with no complications besides feeling tired at night as she just could not take a nap in the afternoon with three ankle-biters running around the house although they did sleep in the afternoon a bit somehow. The loss of Dad was a bit hard to take but there was nothing that anyone could do but just support Mum as much as possible. It was just as well that Dad had taken out the life insurance policy nine years previously as on his death the mortgage was fully paid out leaving the house to Mum freehold. That was surely a relief for Mum.

Tenders closed in the middle of September for the nine storey job in South Perth and as I was keen to find out how I went with this one, I was present at the closing time and witnessed in front of all the other builders that I was the successful builder on this nine storey load bearing brick job. I think that the Architects were also pleased that I was the winner and they asked me to stay behind afterwards.

In the discussion that followed with Harold and David Krantz, they told me that they had already submitted the plans and specifications to the South Perth City Council in order to speed things up as they were very keen to get this one going as soon as possible. The three storey job in William Street was nearing completion and it went well according to plan. Riet had a lot of reservations about doing a nine storey building as she said that I had never done a nine storey before and my answer was that it was only 3 three storey buildings on top of each other and I had done plenty of three storey buildings before. Maybe she was getting a little worried as she was getting close to the birth of our fourth child.

The steel company known as William Adams in O'Connor was my regular supplier of all my steel requirements and one day a fellow walked into the office and wanted to talk to me. His name was Harry van Os and he knew one of the representatives of William Adams which was how he found out about us.

He had experience in running a structural steel shop and as I had been toying in setting up a proper steel shop, I became interested in employing him and getting him started at the present steel shop behind the joinery shop. The Oorschot family had stayed in touch with Kees Gabriels who had moved

from Safety Bay to High Street in East Fremantle and he had opened up an Architectural drafting office in Fremantle.

I had him in mind to design the plans of whatever I was going to build as a new Steel shop. Now across the road from our joinery shop there was a large vacant block that at that time was being leveled by a big D9 bulldozer. I contacted Eric Richards in Perth and asked him to find out what the size was and if available what the asking price was.

He soon came back to me with all the information and it only took me one week to decide that I was ready for an expansion into a proper Steel shop with a 5 ton overhead crane. I signed the paperwork for the purchase of the three acres across the road and had a talk with Kees Gabriels about the size and details of what I saw in my mind as to what the steel shop should look like. I asked him to prepare the initial drawings for me to study before the final ones would be prepared.

CHAPTER 11

MULTI STOREY LOAD BEARING BRICK BUILDINGS

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It was early in October when I was able to start with the setting out on site of the nine storey building. The block was quite deep and the very back of it fell sharply down to Sir James Mitchell Park. The rear boundary was well down the slope and it allowed me to dispose some of the surplus sand over the back if needed. This proved to be helpful a few days later. Between the nine storey building and the front boundary we would later on build a double storey car park. The footings for this job were going to be a lot bigger and deeper and because of the sandy nature of the soil, had to be fully planked to prevent the sides from falling in and inside the planking the soil had to be compacted to a density of seven blows to the foot measured on a penotrometer.

At the start of the excavations we could dig and wheel out the excavated sand and deposit it in front of the building site, but as the digging continued we finished up by using a portable conveyor belt about nine metres long driven by an electric single phase motor. As the power pole had not been connected yet, I used my generator to provide the power. I had realized before-hand that the conveyor belt could be useful, so I bought it from Sandovers machinery where I had previously bought the brickie's hoist. By using the conveyor belt I was able to get rid of a lot of sand over the edge down the slope at the back of the block. In calculating the work schedule, the reinforcing contractors, Huts Brothers Reinforcing, were scheduled to fix the steel on Thursday so that the concrete could be poured on Friday. The concrete and the crane hire were all organized for that day so the footing excavation and planking had to be finished no later than Wednesday night.

It was a tight schedule but it could be done barring unforeseen circumstances. What I did not count on was Riet at home. Tuesday night Riet said that there was action happening inside her belly and that she could be going in very early in the morning to King Edward hospital. In anticipation I phoned

the two guys and my bother Bert, who were working with me on site and told them to carry on by themselves and as there was already a telephone in the site office, I would stay in touch with them in the morning.

At six o'clock in the morning, which was on the 12th of October 1964, I took Riet to Subiaco and stayed with her as I was already used to doing and helped her through the pain struggle as I did before.

At about 10 am Riet made the delivery of another baby and I was also getting used to the fact that again it was another boy. I was really happy and Riet was a lot more comfortable now that it was all over. She told me straight away that his name would be Timothy Paul and as with all the others he was of a good weight of over 7 pounds. I stayed with Riet until about lunch time and then made my way to the job in South Perth curious to find out how they were faring in my absence.

They were having a bit of trouble with sand caving in and I could see that there was no chance of getting it ready for the steel fixers by knock off time today so I got on the phone and first of all I phoned Riet's parents, who were now living in Scarborough, to let them know of the addition to our family and to tell them that mother and son were doing well.

Now at that time Riet's mother was in hospital herself as she had just suffered a stroke and she was not that good at all. That was an additional worry for Riet as her mother was a very big lady who would find it hard to cope with the stroke that she had suffered.

Then I phoned my Mum and told her the good news and she was happy for us. I also phoned Theo and informed him of the good news and also of the bad news that I was in no position to visit Riet in the evening as I could see myself working through the night to get the footings ready in time for the Huts brothers in the morning. My question to him was, could he go in my place to Riet with a bunch of flowers on my behalf and with my love for her. Of course he would do that and I thanked him for that. Theo was a witness to the outburst from Riet's father, who was there also that Wednesday evening. He was disgusted with me for not being with Riet that evening, chosing to work instead. Of course he did not know the reasons for it, but he never forgave me for it.

As from the day that I started to go out with Riet back in 1957, he never liked me and that had never changed over the years. As it turned out we finished up working with lights from the generator, much to the annoyance of the neighbours on the right hand side but we had no option.

At the end it paid off. We finished in time the next morning and the job progressed as planned with the concrete going in on Friday. I looked Riet up on Thursday evening and she understood the situation and there were no hard

feelings from her side. Riet stayed in hospital for seven days and it was great to bring her home after that with the added family member in good health.

I was amazed how quickly she was back in the routine of now looking after four little ones all less than five years old. She showed an incredible strength in coping with them, loving them and caring for them all without complaining even when she was really tired out at night. It was an inspiration for me to do my best to provide for all of them to the best of my ability.

Kees Gabriels presented the preliminary drawings of the steel shop one week after Riet came home from hospital with baby Tim and they really looked impressive. The shop would consist of a large, high sliding door at the front and a double storey brick building at the right hand front to house the toilets and an ablution block downstairs with an office and drawing office upstairs connected to a steel stair case just inside the shop. This building would be one very large and high steel structure with a 5 ton overhead crane that could travel for the full depth of the steel shop. On the right hand side there would be provisions to the supporting steel columns to extend to it if ever there would be a need for it. The structure would occupy the left hand one acre of the whole block leaving the balance of the block untouched.

I had plans to hire that part of the land out if I could find a suitable tenant for it. I was impressed with what Kees had drawn up and I showed it to Harry van Os as he was after all the man with the experience in steel workshops and he would be the one that would be taking charge of manufacturing the complete steel construction as we would naturally build it ourselves. I asked Kees to go ahead with the working drawings and to engage a structural engineer to provide his part of the drawings with the specifications all complete for me to present to the Melville City Council. By this time Sjaak Verschuren had left us and Harry van Os got some contacts of his, who were qualified welders, to join us in the steel shop which at this stage was still at the back of the joinery shop.

The construction of the nine storey building in South Perth was moving along at a steady pace of one storey a fortnight. The one thing with load bearing brick work was that the bricklayers were not allowed to cut any bricks with their trowel. In doing so the strength of the brick work would be compromised because the size of the mortar joint horizontally as well as vertically was not allowed to be more that 10mm thick. If a brick was cut by means of a trowel, the vertical joint would be a lot thicker and irregular so the specifications called for all the bricks to be cut with a brick cutting machine on site. The measurements of all the walls were calculated by the Engineer to match the size of the bricks. Another thing that the Engineer did was with a surveyor’s theodolite, check that all the corners of the building were plumb. While the



The Heights, is now named Parkhill. The exterior has been upgraded as you can see as the development changed from a rental building to up-market apartments.

bricklayers were doing the front half of the building, we would be doing the formwork and the concrete of the back half. We always worked it out that we poured the concrete on the Saturday morning giving the concrete slab day and a half to start the curing process without it being disturbed over the Sunday. It worked out to be a good system and on any future jobs, if it was at all possible, we would adopt the same principle.

In the office we were having a few problems with the new fellow Jim that had taken over Dad's position. He became a bit arrogant and sort of thought that he could take over running the business and he did not get on so well with Theo after a while. Now I had a few talks with Nick Berkelaar, the truck driver, and I found out that at night he was studying accountancy and had just about finished his second year of a four year course.

I approached him enquiring if he could be interested in filling the position of accountant in place of Jim. He jumped at it and so I gave Jim his marching orders and as I had known Nick now for more than a year, I was happy with the turn of events in the office and so was Theo as those two got on well with each other.

The plans came back from the Melville City Council with all the approvals needed but with one proviso that we would allow the State Electricity Commission (S.E.C.) to put an electrical transformer, a large one mounted on the ground, on our land at the front boundary as part of the approvals and we accepted this of course. The ground across the road was leveled out nicely and



Riet with Terry, Jeff, Kevin and Tim in the backyard of the Prosser Way home in April 1965

we could start with setting out the large concrete footings needed to take the heavy steel columns of the steel workshop.

I could see the need for a front end loader and after shopping around at the various machine yards in Redcliffe along the Great Eastern Highway, I settled for a second hand Allice Chalmers model with a one cubic meter bucket. I also took on another truck driver by the name of John Snyders, who was an experienced machine operator as well. I made sure that the ground over the whole of the new steel workshop area was well compacted especially the areas where the steel column footings were going to be constructed. These columns were going to take quite a load with the 5 ton overhead crane being mounted on steel beams fixed to the inside of the columns high up just under the roof. Harry soon made up a sort of crane boom that could be bolted to the bucket of the front end loader with a hook at the top so that a sling could be hooked to it and so be able to lift the steel columns into position over the holding down bolts already cast in the concrete footings. This way as soon as the steel columns were manufactured and painted blue, they could be erected as they became available by using the front end loader with the attachment.

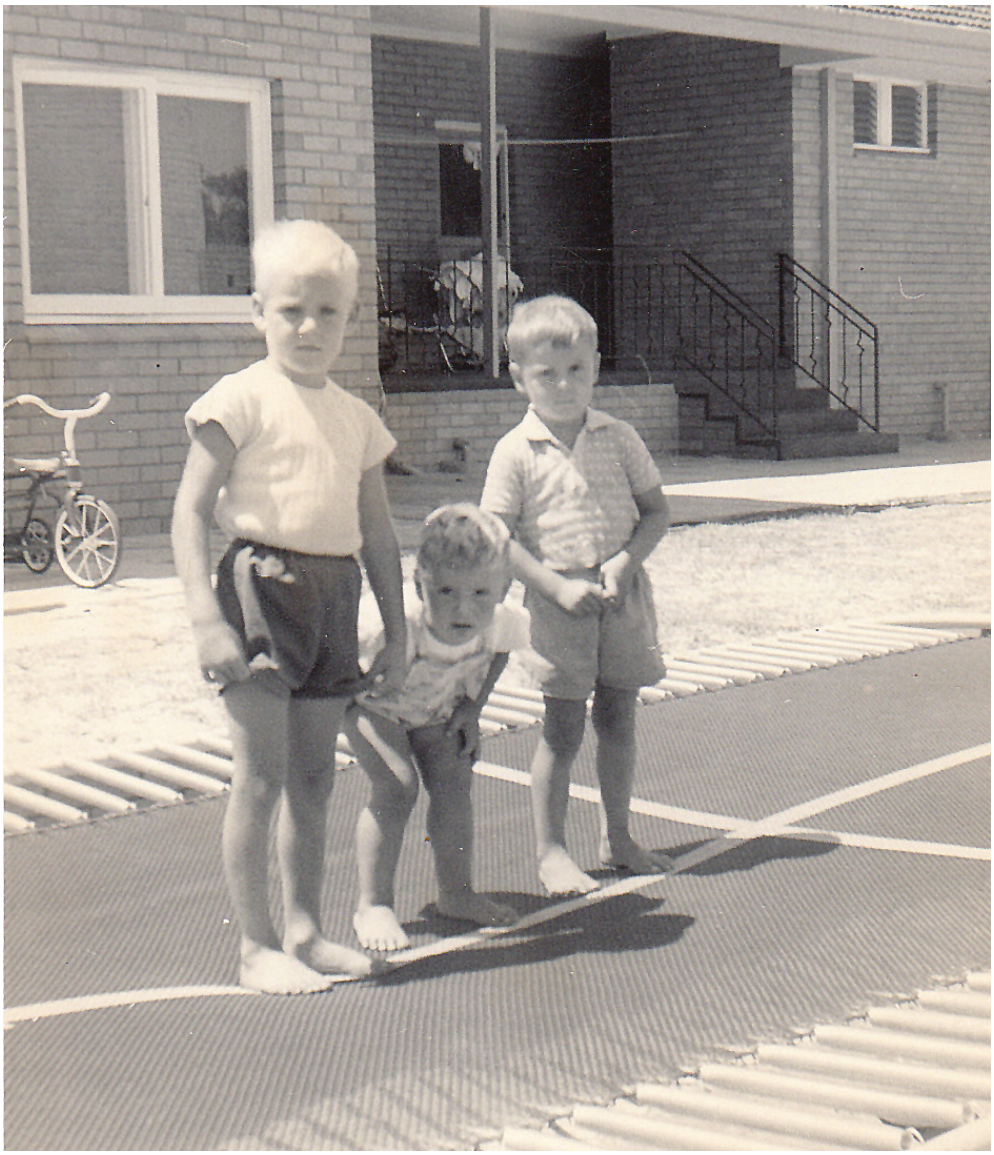
It was an exciting time to watch the progress as I stood in the kitchen at home at dinner times and looked over in the direction of the steel shop under construction with a number of columns already standing tall. When all the columns were in position and the connecting roof beams were all manufactured, we hired a crane to lift them all into position as the front end

loader could not handle this aspect of the assembly process. It looked all very impressive. On the right hand side I had to construct a box gutter for the full depth of the steel shop and I did not like to join 8 ft length of gutter together as in time there could be some leaks at the joints and water could get into the shop. So I managed to get a piece of 24 gauge galvanized flat iron on a roll, wide enough to form the gutter from the sheet metal shop and I hand-folded the gutter on the concrete floor.



Our four boys in front of our home in Prosser Way Myaree.

When that was made it had to be man-handled onto the roof of the steel shop. I built a sloping scaffold using trestles and planks from the shed next door, across Playle Street, to the top of the steel shop roof by using about a dozen people carrying this massive gutter. It worked out well and it gave me the satisfaction that I would never get a leaking gutter. In order to fix the corrugated galvanized sheets on the walls, I built a scaffold from scaffolding tubes about 8 metres long with braces to it and by means of a steel cable, this structure became a portable scaffold which could be moved along with the front end loader with the boom on the bucket. It worked out well and it saved a lot of time.



Trampoline time for Terry, Jeff and Kevin.

The South Perth job was about two months from completion when I received an invitation from Len Buckeridge to tender for an extensive Spanish looking village development in Preston Point Road in East Fremantle overlooking the Swan River. As I needed some more work very soon I grabbed it with both hands as no doubt Len would have seen the progress in South Perth.

It was a prestige job that I wanted to do so I sharpened my pencil a bit and three weeks later the tenders were opened in front of the contenders for this job and it was very satisfying that I beat the next one by only 300 pounds. So as I had been invited to tender for this one, the unwritten rule was that the job would be mine for sure. Len did confirm this to me so I did not, at this stage, look for other jobs to tender for. I phoned him every week to ask him when I should come in to sign the contract and he said very soon as they were finalizing the finances for the project. This went on for about four weeks and I started to get pissed off with him and then on the next phone call to him he said that he was sorry but the contract had gone to the next builder that was 300 pounds higher than I was, because this builder was a friend of one of the syndicate members doing the project. I pointed out to him that this was not ethical with invitation tenders and he as the architect should have made that clear to this syndicate. He then just laughed and said: “too bad”. I told him that I would never have anything to do with him and hung up.

You can imagine that I was livid. I immediately checked out the tender columns in the West Australian and noticed that the State Housing Commission was calling tenders for the extension of the Leeuwin Barracks, a Navy Housing complex, also in Preston Point Road. I spent a lot of my evening time in pricing this one as I was keen to get it and when the tenders were opened at the State Housing Commission offices in East Perth, guess what! I was the successful one again. They wanted to find out how soon I could start as the job was urgent and I answered them by saying “NOW”.

The double storey car park in front of the nine storey building in South Perth was just about finished as was the steel shop with the concrete floor six inches thick reinforced with steel mesh. Soon we would be transferring all the steel processing equipment from the old steel shop behind the joiner shop to the new impressive steel shop across the road. The 5 ton overhead crane was painted in the Oorschot Blue colour with the white letters “OORSCHOT STEEL” on it. As the new steel shop only occupied one third of the large block, I was looking for someone to lease the rest of the land on a two yearly basis and I was lucky to meet a guy that wanted to lease the land on my terms and use it for a car wrecking yard. He would put up the fence at his cost and if and when he would leave, the fence was still his to take with him. By the time that

I was able to hand over The Heights, the nine storey building, I was well on the way to starting the Leeuwin Barracks extension.

We found out that Riet was again in the family way and it was quite a surprise but I suppose these things do happen when you love each other the way we did. Again Dr. Love informed us that we should look towards the increase of our brood of kids at about the middle of March next year (1966). Some time before, our cabinet maker Auro Stazzonelli, had made us a nice oval shaped dining table with a Formica top on it and it looked really good especially with three kids, one in a high chair, and the both of us around it at dinner time each evening at about 5:30 pm. Riet insisted that I would at least be together with our family at dinner time and as the years went by, that became a normal thing for all of us even as the kids grew up and became teenagers, we always tried to be together at the dinner table at 5:30 pm. Even now at the age of 79, I still have dinner with Riet at the same time of 5:30 pm.

Soon after I started the Leeuwin Barracks job I bought from Terry Crommelins Machinery another platform hoist that could be towed behind the ute, but this one had a bigger platform to take two wheel bearers at the same time and the wheels were the same size as car wheels. Once the hoist was installed in position, the wheels were taken off and brought back to the yard in Playle Street to prevent them from being stolen from the job. This was the only job



John's job, Waterloo Heights, in East Perth overlooking the W.A.C.A. grounds. Notice the light tower on the right.

where the windows were not aluminium but galvanized steel to match with the existing building. Driving past the site where I had missed out on the Spanish type development in Preston Point Road on my way to the Leeuwin Barracks I noticed that nothing had been happening and I became curious as to why? I was starting to realize that if bloody Len Buckeridge had kept me on a line at that time, I could have been out of work for a long time, something that I could not afford to be, so I thought, just as well that he gave the job to the other builder instead of me because now I was busy working and that was just fine by me.

Driving along Marine Parade in Cottesloe I noticed a For Sale sign on the corner of Princess Street by John Mair Real Estate. It was a vacant block but it was at a lower level than the surrounding streets. It looked like a very difficult block to build on and therefore it was still on the market I thought, so I made some enquiries with John Mair and I noticed that he had a very strong English accent as if he had swallowed a potato. Riet and I often remarked on this in years to come as we did a lot of business with him from there on. I spent some time on what I could do with the property if I was to buy it and develop it into units as the location was great, so close to the ocean front. I thought that if I partly filled the block and then built units with undercroft locked garages it could become a very desirable set of units. I worked out some plans and then took them to Kees Gabriels to play around with my suggestions. He liked what I had in mind and was going to work on it. I then negotiated with John Mair over the price that I was prepared to pay pointing out to him that there was going to be a lot of earth work involved in filling the site which would cost a lot. I finished up paying a lower price than what I had bargained for and I was ready to go ahead with the planning.

In the meantime a few things had been happening at home in Grenville Street before Dad passed away. My sister Sjaan (Jan) named after Mum, married Joe Urlings on the 9th of February 1963. My sister Riet entered the convent in Riverton as a Nun in March 1963 and my sister Cisca married Gerard Barten on the 26th of October 1963. After Dad’s passing away in July 1964, it became harder for Mum to keep the household going with the three boys and Anne and then both Frank and Hans announced their engagements around about October 1966 and for both of them to get married in April 1967. Bert had already moved out at home and was boarding in Melville somewhere, so it was time for Mum to change things at home. The house became too much for her to look after, so the time was right for her to sell the house. As Corry and Piet had already been looking after Mum it was sensible for Mum and Anne to move in with them permanently as Mum was going backwards health wise and needed looking after.

I was getting on well with the Leeuwin Barracks job in Preston Point Road when Krantz and Sheldon called me to find out if I could be interested in tendering for a seven storey job in East Perth in Waterloo Crescent. Of course I was interested so I got Nick Berkelaar to pick up the plans, specifications and the Bill of Quantities so that I could get started at night to work out my tender price for the project. I paid a visit to the site and realized that it would be looking out over the W.A.C.A. grounds, which was interesting. Entry to the site would have to be from the back and from the side street being Horatio Street. It was also at about the same time that my brother John and Pieter Heesters, who had been working together doing roofs and other work, were about to break up as a team as Pieter had injured his back and could not work for a while doing heavy physical work.

I had a good talk to the both of them and if I was going to be successful on the East Perth job, I was willing to offer them a position as foreman because there was no way that I could run the Cottesloe and East Perth job while I was flat out completing the Leeuwin Barracks job as well. As being a foreman was something new to them both, they saw it as a challenge and a new stage in their working life. Pieter would be in charge of the Cottesloe job when the plans had been approved by the Council giving him enough time to recuperate from his back injury. Three weeks later I learned that I was successful in East Perth and John would be the foreman on the Waterloo Heights job.

There was one policy that I rigidly stuck to and that was that I did all the initial setting out of all the jobs with the foreman on site just to make sure that the measurements from the boundary to the building were as shown on



Pieter's job on the corner of Marine Parade and Princess Street Cottesloe, known as Kooringal Court.



John's second job, Cliff Top, along Mill Point Road, South Perth.

plan. If the footings were poured incorrectly I could then only blame myself. Right throughout no mistakes in that direction were made on any of our jobs because of the double checking that we did on each other and I think that this method of setting out paid off at the end. As it became a habit by Krantz and Sheldon to submit the plans and specifications to the council beforehand to save time, John and myself were soon in East Perth doing the setting out of the Waterloo Heights project.

Some weeks before that I had created with Harry van Os in the steel shop three portable site offices made out of steel framing and galvanized metal cladding with storage space internally and sloping desk for plans and additional shelving. These would come in handy together with the sheds for cement and other items on the jobs.

Shortly after the start of East Perth something else happened. Riet was sort of getting messages from her stomach that whoever was in there did not like it there any more and wanted out. It was letting Riet know that it was time to move to King Edward in Subiaco and that was what we did early on the 22nd of March 1966. As usual the hospital gown was waiting for me to put on as the same robust nurse was well aware of the procedure in our case. The only difference was that Dr. Love who would normally attend to Riet was away for a few weeks so his father, who was as good as his son in this baby business, was to take over. I for my part was sure that this time we were going to be awarded with a baby girl as I thought that I had been patient long enough.

In the past the doctor would be coming and going during the delivery period but this time Dr. Love Sr. never moved from Riet's bed all day.

It was soon realized that this birth was an all day job and I also learned to become patient in the process. It was not until in the early evening that a totally exhausted Riet finally pushed the baby into the world and again we had produced another boy.

It did not matter what it was as we were both so happy that the baby was complete and healthy and so Riet announced that his name would be Christopher Robert. As usual I made the phone calls to Riet's parents and to my Mum and I stayed on for a while with Riet and the new baby. The lady next door, Aggie, had been looking after our kids in the past and also today, so I was not worried about the kids at home and the next evening I did not have to send someone in my place to bring a bunch of flowers, like it was when Tim was born, as I went myself this time. Coming to think of it, we now had five boys and the oldest was five years old. In September our first son Terry would turn six years of age. The news of this addition to our family soon spread amongst the work force and one morning one of the carpenters on the job in East Perth asked me how I could manage to create such a family so fast knowing the hours I worked at night and all and I replied that it does not take long at all, you can do it during the T.V. commercials. I just don't know if he ever took my advice. Riet was home a week later with Chris and I was amazed at the new strength she was able to muster to look after all five of them plus all the household chores of washing and cooking. Aggie next door turned out to be a good friend and one day I decided to buy an above ground full size trampoline and when installed, it proved a great entertainer, not only for the older boys, but also for Riet and Aggie and her kids.

I had a habit of standing in the shower at night allowing the hot water to just run over me and stand there relaxing and I often let my mind wonder. Very often ideas were born in the shower and as the job in Cottesloe was attracting a lot of interest in the form of sales inquiries, which were handled by John Mair, I was already thinking of the next project. I had already put my stamp on South Perth in Mill Point Road so I was thinking of Windsor Street. It was a cul-de-sac and I could see the possibility of doing a development at the end of the cul-de-sac overlooking the Swan River in the direction of Perth. Another thought that was created in the shower was the idea to make a world tour with Riet. It would give her a fantastic break and I certainly could do with one as well. So when I got out of the shower and sat down with Riet having a coffee after all the kids were in bed, I mentioned my brainwave about the trip and her reaction quite naturally was: "What about the kids"? It took about a week to get Riet warmed to this trip which was going to last about eight weeks and we planned to leave in the third week of June. Aggie was very willing and able to look after our kids although we were able to leave baby Chris with

friends of ours that were li
Bassendean.

I had Kees Gabriels draw u
sketch plan of a 10 storey bu
of eighty apartments propose
built on the land in Windsor S
This was at this stage very se
as I had not made any approa
to the owners that were liv
the houses in Windsor Street.
and Pieter would be busy witl
their jobs and the steel sh
busy making my own floor ce
copying the ones that I had b
before from Acrow in Welsl
They came in three sizes, the
Boy, the Boy and the Baby
I got Harry organized to make
initially 100 Super Boys, 5(
and 20 Baby Boys and as
bought two lathes, I also got him to
make 100 props.



John doing a mortar adhesion test for the structural engineer.

There was another reason for me wanting to do this world trip. If I was successful in acquiring this land in Windsor Street, I would need finance to carry out this project and I could use a visit to some London and New York finance houses as an excuse to make at least part of the cost of this trip tax deductable. I made up a package containing all the plans and development proposals for Windsor Street to present to the finance houses in London and New York.

We left in June to fly first to Rome where we spent the day looking at some of the famous sights and of course the Saint Pieters Cathedral. From there to Holland and we made a surprise visit to Riet's girlfriend Ada that she had been corresponding with from the day that she left Holland back in 1952. We hired a car and spent some time looking up old friends like the three boys that I grew up with in Eindhoven and of course we made a trip to Heerlen in the south of Limburg to see how Herma Werven was doing with her three kids. They were doing fine in the duplex half that she had bought with the money that I had sent her from the sale of their home in Innaloo and she was so pleased to see us. They had a small backyard and while we were there we bought the kids two small white rabbits which they had a lot of fun with and loved them



8 up-market apartments at 101 The Esplanade South Perth.

to bits running around in the yard. It was great to see Herma settled down with her kids in a new surrounding and having her sister nearby was a great support for her in these hard times after the loss of Henk. We spent three days in Stockholm in Sweden and found that at that time of the year there was just about no darkness at night being so close to the North Pole and this city was a very interesting place to be.

From Holland we took the ferry from the Hook of Holland to London and we found out that after being used to driving a car on the left-hand side of the road in Australia and then driving on the right-hand side in Holland, getting off in England, I was again driving on the left-hand side but with the steering wheel of the Dutch car on the left side of the car. All very confusing and what made it worse were the amount of one way streets in London. You looked on the map and planned the route you wanted to take and then the one way signs threw you completely off course. We were advised later by the people at the finance house that I went to, that in London you just took a taxi for that very reason. They seemed interested in my building proposal but at this stage could not give me any assurance of their possible involvement in it. We spent three days in London and then drove back to Holland via the Dover ferry and Belgium.

At times my mind took me back to Perth and all the building activities but knowing that I could rely on the people there in charge, I was not worried about the business at home but I was getting worried about Riet. It was obvious that she was pining for the kids and in particular for baby Chris being only just now four months old. Of course I was longing for the kids too and we were both looking forward to seeing them again soon. Our next move was to get rid of the car and fly to New York. Through my connection with the Knights of



The two of us in the Copacabana Club in New York.

the Southern Cross, who had their office in Pier Street with a travel agency as part of their set up, we had an open booking for all of our flights so it was easy to get the flight to New York.

After settling in at our hotel we thought of doing the business end of our visit first and got a similar response as in London meaning just wait and see what happens, sort of. We did some sight seeing like the famous Statue of Liberty, went right up into the upward stretched arm which was holding the torch and enjoyed the view over the vast river expanse from this majestic statue.

One evening we spent at the famous Copacabana Club in the Copa Lounge following the show of Danny Thomas which we thoroughly enjoyed and even had a nice photo taken in which Riet really looked smashing. But after a few days Riet felt that she had had enough and she just wanted to go home to the kids and I could not blame her. So we caught a flight at about 2 pm local time bound for Sydney on a Thursday. Flying via San Francisco and Hawaii nonstop, losing one day at the date line, we landed in Sydney on Saturday morning at 6 am and got a connecting flight to Perth and were home at midday totally worn out but happy to be home again.

We had been away for about six weeks and we sure felt it. We were ready for our own bed and some well earned sleep.

The kids looked all in great shape and Chris almost doubled in size and could still remember his mother after all this. For us it was a great experience but we would never be apart from our kids again after this trip.

Straight after we came home it was time for our Terry to start the next phase in his life and that was starting his first year at the Corpus Christie School that I had built before in Evershed Street just down the road from our house in Prosser Way. He fitted in very well and from the first day it was as if he belonged there and as he had plenty of brothers at home he had no trouble mixing with all the other kids in the class. Because he had been going there already for Sunday Mass with us he was well acquainted with the surroundings of the school church. In the first few weeks Riet took him to school in the car with all the others in the car with her but after that he just walked to school all by himself if the weather allowed that. Riet could see him all the way from our front lounge window up to the school entrance. Chris turned out to be a very hungry baby and he kept on eating whatever was presented to him and he was putting on a fair amount of weight.

After a few days settling in again and for Riet to get back into the routine of everyday caring for the kids and cooking meals and feeding us all, I went about my business as usual.

Both John and Pieter had progressed well with their jobs and what was the steel shop before, at the back of the joiner shop, was now turned into a spraying booth for Auro Stazzonelli and storage for completed cupboards awaiting delivery to the jobs. What was needed also was a light weight 3 ton low flat-top truck for the delivery of cupboards etc, so we soon bought one like that for this purpose. Through my contacts with the Perth City Council because of Waterloo Heights,

I got talking to the City Engineer and found out that they were interested in buying any surplus sand from excavations. They needed a lot of clean filling sand for the southern part of Heirisson Island south of the Causeway. Up until now any surplus sand had to be carted to the nearest tip and paid for getting rid of it. Now I could get paid for delivering the surplus sand and the distance was a lot closer. I jumped at it with both hands. I called in at Krantz and Sheldon just to let them know that I was back and at the same time find out if there were any jobs in the pipe line. They told me that there were a number of them coming up and that they would let me know as soon as they were getting ready to tender for.

The possible development in Windsor Street was still playing around in my mind so one day I drove to this particular street and worked out how I could best tackle the situation. I then picked out the property that was central in the proposed development and called at the house in question and asked

the lady when both she and her husband would be home for me to come back and talk to them. The lady wanted to know what it was all about but I said that I would discuss it with them when I could see them both. An appointment was made for the following evening and then I told them who I was and what I already had built along Mill Point Road and that I was interested in buying their property. After discussing what I had in mind to build and what they would consider as a fair and acceptable price for me to pay for their property, I explained that the first step would be for me to take out a three month option to buy their property at the price that they were willing to sell it for. The price that we agreed upon to do business with was above the current market value, so the owners were happy to go along with what I told them.

The next thing was to formulate the option offer properly on an" Offer and Acceptance" document in order to make it into a lawful valid contract. The cost of the option would be $500 payable by me to them and it would be non refundable to me if I did not sign a contract to buy their property at the agreed price after three months. The need for the option was to give me time to finalize the finance for the whole building project as I had presented to both the finance houses in London and New York. Within two weeks of signing the option document I learned that both finance houses were not interested at all and it looked like I was going to lose my 500 bucks in due course. I thought maybe I could raise the finance locally so I kept this all just to myself. And guess what happened?

I was only five weeks into the three months option time when a certain Mr. Alan Bond phoned me and invited me into his office at St. Georges Terrace. I was curious as to what he was wanting and when sitting across him at his large desk, he said that he found out that I had an option on the property in Windsor Street and that he was interested at buying this option from me. That was a hell of a surprise to me as at this stage I was getting worried about getting any finance locally but I just kept a straight face and listened at what he was telling me. I then told him in short what my plans were for this property in Windsor Street and then he offered to pay me $20,000 for the $500 option. In my mind that sounded like a good profit to me as I probably would not be able to raise the finance in time before the option would expire, but I did not let on. I told him that I was going to make a lot more than that when I was ready to start my building project on this site.

He then increased his offer to $30,000 and after giving it a bit more thought I answered his offer by saying that, if he increased his offer to $35,000 and allowed me to be the builder for whatever he was going to build there, we would have a deal. However if he gave the job to someone else, Alan Bond needed to pay me a further $5,000 as compensation. He was willing to agree to

this and then it was all duly formulated in contract form in his office. The next day I went back to him to hand in the option contract that I had and in return I received a bank cheque for $35,000. I could not believe my luck in achieving this unexpected outcome. Alan did tell me that morning that he had plans to build a large concrete slip formwork job in the form of a tower and as I had no experience with this I said that I would get properly informed at this method of building.

Next thing I did was contact the slip formwork people in Sydney to get more knowledge about this sort of work and they invited me to Sydney but first asked me to go to Tasmania and inspect a water tower in progress of being slipped and poured just outside of Launceston. And that is what I did. First to Tasmania with my super 8 movie camera and I was given all the assistance from the builders there on site, who had been instructed by the people in Sydney of my coming. It was very interesting and I learned a lot from it and in my mind I could already see myself in South Perth doing a slip formwork job in the near future.

A week later I phoned Alan and made an appointment to see him. I brought along my super 8 projector and my portable movie screen and set it all up in his office and he showed a bit of interest in the film but I was getting the feeling that he had already made up his mind what his plans were. And true to his word a week later he phoned telling me to pick up the $5,000 as he was going to give the job to Multiplex in due course. In hindsight it did not surprise me as him and John Roberts, the boss of Multiplex, were mates.

Ah well such is life! After all I could not complain, I had just turned $500 into $40,000 in a matter of eight weeks.

Another thing that was developing was the business relationship with Otis Elevator Company. They had now installed a number of lifts in the buildings that I was building. Of course I had a structural steel shop which was always looking for more work, so I got to make the steel lay-outs for the machine rooms at the top of the lift shafts. They were a flat steel plate about five mm thick and were the size of the lift shaft with all the holes and fixtures mounted on this sheet. This sheet was then laid on top of the formwork ready to take the concrete with the reinforcement to provide the base for the lift equipment in the lift machine room. They got all my lifts in the future and they gave us any amount of work in return. That worked out to be a nice arrangement.

In Cottesloe some of the apartments had already been pre-sold before completion which was appreciated from my point of view and as time went on I was anxious to pick up more work and then I got a phone call from Krantz and Sheldon that the next job in South Perth was ready to tender for. The job was going to be called Cliftop and it was close to the Heights in Mill Point

Road. I had a good look at the building site and realized that this was going to be a good job to get as there was plenty of land alongside the elongated proposed building to make it easy to work. I also drove to the bottom of the escarpment along the South Perth Esplanade, below where Cliftop was to be built and I noticed a For Sale sign on a vacant block of land right at the end of the road. It had a good view over the river towards the city and I straight away saw the potential for a development seeing that I had just got some extra cash in hand from Cottesloe and Alan Bond. It did not take long to decide and I bought the land and had a talk to Kees Gabriels about what my thoughts were for building some up- market villas on this land.

In the mean time I got stuck in working out, mainly at night, my tender price for the Cliftop job as I was keen to get this one. Halfway through doing this I was called into the Krantz and Sheldon offices because there was another job along Mounts Bay Road in Crawley close to getting ready to go to tender and as this was a prestige job of high class finishes, they were selecting the builders whom they would be inviting to tender for this project. Most of the classy apartments in this one were already sold off the plan beforehand and Harold Krantz himself was one of the buyers, who bought one just under the penthouse on the seventh floor. The penthouse took the complete top floor and the other levels contained two apartments each. They even made a model of the proposed building and that was displayed in the lobby of the Architect's offices on the second floor of the ten storey office building in Adelaide Terrace in East Perth. Recently they moved from their much too small office upstairs in St. Georges Terrace to this new one in East Perth.

This up market block of apartments in Crawley was to be named Illinois. Even the name sounded classy and a site inspection revealed that the only access to the site was from the side street called Windfield Avenue, which was accessible only through Kings Park. There was an old house on it but that had already been demolished before. There was also a very impressive granite rockery retaining wall just inside the front boundary. I had a talk to Pieter as he was nearing completion in Cottesloe, just to gauge his reaction that if I could land this one in Crawley could he see himself capable to take this one on. I did get a positive YES from him and that more or less committed me to make sure that I got this one. I liked the project very much because it was a prestige job.

A week later I was successful with the Cliftop job and a fortnight later I landed Illinois. That was a lot of excitement for us and John, Pieter and Theo as well. With the extra jobs that I had just landed I realized that we had to make provisions to store all our formwork equipment and scaffolding so I arranged to manufacture and build a large storage shed on the left hand side

of the steel shop and as we had now a number of trucks and a front end loader we were in need of a garage with a service pit to look after all our rolling stock. John Snyders was the man most suited to do all the servicing as he was very mechanically minded and with these extensions it was natural to also install a petrol and diesel pump with under-ground tanks in front of the garage. From here on we were buying fuel at a discount at bulk prices and it was very convenient now to have our own bowsers.

The supply of bricks from the Cardup Brick Company was changing. Up until now bricks were transported loose on mainly 8 ton trucks, like the ones I had. But the brick company was starting to put their bricks in packs strapped together with metal straps and then handled by fork lifts on trucks. A company by the name of Jurkov Brothers made up large table top trucks with an overhead crane on steel rails to transport bricks for the various builders, but as we were a very good customer with Cardup, they were happy to stack the bricks on pallets that we would supply them with. It just meant that we, in the steel shop, had to make a pair of forks that could be fitted to the bucket of our front end loader in order to off-load the bricks on site.

With the increase of jobs and the additional carting of bricks I increased our fleet of trucks to five and as the joiner shop was flat out producing a lot of items for the jobs we were needing large supplies of dry timber. On the corner of North Lake Road and McCoy Street there was a vacant block of land that I thought could very well suit me as a piece of land on which to stockpile large quantities of timber so I bought it. Then I put up a steel post and cyclone wire fence on the boundary with barbed wire at the top and a steel gate at the McCoy Street side.

The next thing I did was call the saw miller down south and order a number of whole timber stacks and then for about six weeks we made a weekly trip with five trucks, myself driving one of them, leaving at 4 o’clock in the morning. Now there was a regulation in place by the State Government that you were only allowed to cart timber no longer than 8 foot on trucks from the South West to the Perth area. The Government was trying to increase the use of rail transport from the South West and to enforce this they had inspectors on the road anywhere between Mandurah, Pinjarra and Bunbury to try and catch any offenders. So to beat them at their game any longer pieces were stacked in the middle of the truck with shorter ones around them hiding the longer ones. We got away with it every time but they were very long days, driving to the Margaret River area, then hand-loading five trucks and driving back to Myaree. We usually got back by around 10 o’clock at night, tipped the timber off in the now new timber yard and that made it a very long and tiring day.

I employed a fellow also from the Armadale church group, Jan Visser, as the permanent yard man to stack the timber and keep it covered with second hand corrugated iron sheets to protect it from the sun. The reason for the increased amount of timber that was needed was because all the front doors into the units had to be “one hour rating” fire proof doors. They had to be solid jarrah covered with water proof 5mm ply-wood. The finished thickness of the doors had to be 42mm. They were very heavy to handle and the carpenters found it hard going to hang these.

John made a flying start at the Cliftop job after handing over Waterloo Heights to the Architect’s full satisfaction and it was on time too.

Setting out Cliftop was really easy as it was just a long slender building on the right-hand side of the block leaving plenty of working area on the left side to store large quantities of bricks now on our own pellets. That way we just left the front end loader with the attached forklift attachment on the job while all five trucks were carting bricks to this job continually. I needed to do that this way as the front end loader was required very soon at Pieter’s job, Illinois in Crawley, where we could not do any setting out until a lot of sand was cleared away and stock pilled at the very edge of the site. This would be carted to Heirisson Island at a later date when it suited us.

While John Snyder, who was the regular front end loader driver, was doing this earth works at Illinois, we hit a snag. The left-hand rear wheel bearing packed it in and John had no alternative than to spend the next two days attending to the repairs on site. This was a bit of a setback that I could not afford time wise as every day was important. As soon as the repair job was done and the machine was working again, I went to Redcliff just past the Airport where the large industrial area was, and had a look at some machinery at Bell Brothers and others in that area.

I decided on a Hough 50 pay loader with a 2 cubic meter bucket using the Allice Chalmers as a trade in. It was quite an investment but I could see that I just had to do it. I could not have a machine breaking down on me any more and in hindsight I should not have gone for a second hand one in the first place. It was just false economy.

After all the sand was excavated and stockpiled at Illinois, Pieter and I did the setting out so that he with his team could do the footings which were quite substantial. The Allice Chalmers was taken back to the yard in Myaree where the change over took place with the Hough 50. While the new machine was in Myaree I got Harry to increase the size of the jib and refit it to the new bucket of the Hough 50. This way we could reach higher and heavier steel in the future. Next was the job of carting the stockpile of sand from Illinois to Heirisson Island using all of our five trucks.

As a result of all the extra lift contracts with Otis Elevator Company we were asked by them to quote for the manufacture and delivery of a steel framed Z structure, on which they then would mount the escalator. After working on a price with Harry, we were awarded with our first two orders of these structures and they had to be delivered to Fremantle to the Freecorne store in Adelaide Street that was being modernized.

These structures go from a ground floor to a first floor and vice versa. When you go up on an escalator, you have no idea what is underneath carrying the moving steps that you stand on. It was very impressive to see this structure coming together in the steel shop.

The next thing was the transportation of them and if they were going to be transported on a semi-trailer that would be a costly affair, so we tried to put one on top of our International Harvester truck and although the escalator structure was sticking out the front of the truck about 3 metres and about 5 metres past the back, it was still a workable way to transport them. These two had to be on site at 10 o'clock on the Friday morning in Adelaide Street as a large crane would be in position to lift these steel escalator structures through an opening in the roof to its location inside. Of course I drove one truck and John Snyders drove the other one. We had plenty of red flags at the front and back of the escalator structures and we both just drove from the steel shop along High Street straight into Fremantle. It must have been some sight as we went along one truck behind the other and all that without any police escort. We just did it and got away with it. You could not do that nowadays.

What a sight it was to see this steel structure way up in the air hanging on some steel cables slowly being lowered through the roof into the building. I really enjoyed the experience and it made me feel good.

The architects Krantz and Sheldon were putting out a lot of work to be tendered for and I showed a lot of interest in taking on every one that was available. It meant a lot of evening work for me as I did spend a fair amount of time out on the jobs. Not every time was I successful in winning these tenders but I did win one and that was Rhodes Hotel in Mill Point Road about half-way between Cliftop and the Canning Highway. It consisted of 8 stories of units and an elaborate restaurant all in polished jarrah finish. The owners were the Fermanis Brothers who also had a coffee lounge in Murray Street in the City. I had already taken on my brother Bill to work for me. I started him off at the South Perth Esplanade job with the double storey development of eight up-market apartments on the land that I had bought before. I went with him to do the setting out and then I left him with two men to put in the concrete footings.



Escalator support structure on our truck to Fremantle.

When they were in, Rhodes Hotel was ready to start and I put him in charge as foreman to start this one. Again we did the setting out together and he was on his way. I myself looked after the Esplanade job when the bricklayers started and I had a For Sale sign erected as I was intending to sell them myself. I thought that the location would sell these apartments without any problem. By now all the other multi storey projects were marching along just nicely.

Towards the end of 1967 I felt that we as a family deserved a break and in particular Riet as there was never an end to the forever caring of our five kids seven days a week. So, in discussion with Barnie van Praag of the travel agency that was part of the Knights of the Southern Cross in Pier Street, he came up with a suggestion to fly to Sydney and then board a cruise ship, the Iberia, which was doing a cruise to New Zealand and the Caledonia area including Noumea and then when returning to Sydney take the Oriana and cruise back to Fremantle. All this would be over the Christmas and New Year break. I then suggested this plan to Riet who was at first a bit scared of doing something like this with five kids so small, but the idea slowly grew on her and at the end I made the arrangements with Barnie van Praag and we were on our way a couple of days before Christmas.

I knew of a brother of my mother, an uncle Piet who was living just west of Sydney, so the next morning, before embarking the cruise ship, I hired a car and we paid him a visit and it was nice to catch up with family and talk about things back in Rotterdam. The kids were offered lollies and heaps of



Going up in the air by crane into the Freecorne building.

chocolates and in particular Chris put away lots of chocolates. From there back to the wharf where the Iberia was moored but just before getting to it, Riet sitting in the front with Chris on her lap, caught the full brunt of what Chris had been stowing into his mouth that morning and she was covered with it and so was the front of the hire car. Near the corner of the wharf there was a café and I stopped there and asked if we could get something to clean the mess with on Riet, Chris and the car and I must say they were very helpful. What a start this was for our holiday, but we soon got ourselves settled on board in our cabin and I went back to return the hire car which was cleaned by Riet but still a bit smelly.

On board they had plenty of places for the kids to be entertained by staff who were there to look after them while we had a break from the kids. For us it was also an experience to do this cruise with five small children. Amongst other places we called in at the Bay of Islands at the North East side of the North Island of New Zealand and we went on a boat trip through a maze of islands and through what was called a hole in the rock on one of the larger islands. All very impressive it was.

One of the other places we called in at was Noumea where we walked on the large jetty with Chris settled on Riet’s hip and we watched a group of local girl dancers singing and performing for the tourists. I could see that all the kids were really taking it all in and I don’t know how much of it they would remember later on but it sure must have been an experience for them. For the



A sight very noticeable around Perth at that time.

New Year's Day party they had organized a dress up party for the kids with prizes for the best one dressed. Some parents on the ship must have known about this event before boarding and had brought with them all sorts of fancy professional outfits for their kids. We never knew beforehand about this and as we did want to enter our kids into this event Riet managed to get a lot of crepe paper of various colours from the art shop on board and then her dress maker skills were put to the test. I was amazed what she produced out of all that crepe paper. The judges must have appreciated what effort Riet had put into all this by rewarding a couple of prizes to our kids.

Before we knew it we were back in Sydney to disembark and board the Oriana the next day for the return journey to Fremantle. There were opportunities to do any sight seeing along the way in Melbourne and Adelaide but we decided to just take it easy and enjoy the rest on board and play with the kids to pass the time. Beyond Adelaide it was a bit rough but we knew beforehand that was likely to happen and then we saw the entrance of the Fremantle harbour as we had seen it before in 1952 when we entered it on the Johan van Oldenbarnevelt. It was now January 1968 and then it passed through my mind what I had achieved in just less than 16 years. In that short space of time, work wise as well as family wise. It was really hard to believe.

When we got home I was all rearing to go again after this well deserved break with our kids and I could see that there was a lot of building activity ahead of us. I made a point of displaying the name OORSCHOT in blue on



Pieter's second job in Crawley known as Illinois.

the scaffolding and wherever we had a hoist tower we made up these letters six foot high in red and fixed them to the tower.

It was one way to make our name known around the place. I remember that Multiplex was adopting the same idea on their jobs. It must have made an impression because Eric Richards the Real Estate agent, that I had had a lot of dealings with in the past, asked me if he could display his name on top of the jobs that I was doing and of course I had to decline that request.

The Esplanade job was nearly completed and during the construction time I sold already four of them and the owners had moved in straight away when they settled. From there on every second Sunday I had a home open in the afternoon and I was very busy with showing prospective clients through. It did not take long to sell the other four apartments as they really were very unique where they were located looking over the river. As I mentioned before, I kept on tendering for more jobs and then by early April I won a three storey job of 30 units in Maylands. It was going to be called Waterfront Mews and it was in Bardon Place.

The winning of this tender was very welcome of course but I had one problem. I had no more available foremen at this stage so I placed an advertisement in the West Australian and a chap by the name of Terry Bounsell replied to my advertisement. Whilst talking to him, I was impressed with his desire to work in with my method of working. He was a carpenter by trade which I felt was important in order to lead a team of tradesmen. When I signed the contract for the Maylands job with Krantz and Sheldon I started him off and as usual we did the setting out together.

At the same time we found out that Riet was again in the family way. The cruise holiday must have been a relaxing factor for Riet for this to happen. It certainly was not planned but I suppose these things do happen just the same and following a visit, as usual together, to Dr. Love in West Perth, the verdict was that we should be getting a November baby. Quietly in my mind I thought that this must be my Margaret in the making but I just kept this inclination to my self. We made some changes in the back-yard of our house and the above ground trampoline was built into the ground with a brick wall creating a void underneath the netting of the trampoline making it a lot safer for the kids to play and jump on and off. Then I was thinking about getting a below ground concrete swimming pool built directly behind the back bedroom of the house and after getting a couple of quotes I placed the order for one to be built. Of course it had to have a safety fence with it.

Another thing that I did was once a month on a Saturday afternoon when it was going to be a new moon, with Ken, the sales rep from Crommelins Machinery, we would go rabbit shooting. Another person, sometimes Riet's brother Bert or any one of my own brothers, would come along with us. We would drive in my Falcon ute, which had an open frame canopy at the back, to Meredin way past Northam and go spotlight shooting for rabbits and what else would show themselves to us in the spotlight. Ken grew up in that area and knew every farmer there and had their permission to enter their paddocks. I still had my Lithgow 22 rifle that I bought a long time ago and I also had recently bought a Browning fully automatic shot gun for this purpose.

We used an old empty house on one of the farms as our base and when we got there about 6 o'clock in the evening and after a bite to eat we went around the paddocks with Ken driving and the two of us standing in the back with the spotlight and the guns. At around 9 o'clock we would be back at the old house, making a coffee and digging a bit of a hole outside and after slicing open the belly of the rabbits, about 25 of them, we would just clean out the insides guts, lungs and the hearts and then hang the carcasses on small hooks on a long wire on the open verandah of this old house. The reason for this was to preserve the rabbits with the skin still on them.

We then would go for another two more runs and if we saw a kangaroo, we would shoot it as well because from its tail you could cook a nice soup at home. Another thing that drew our attention was if we saw a fox. In the spot-light their eyes were like sheep eyes but if there were only two eyes, indicating it was a fox, that is where the shotgun came in handy because it usually was a chase along the paddocks driving and firing as we went along. The farmer was always happy if we got any foxes as they were killing the lambs in the paddocks. We would cut off their tails and give them to the farmer who used

to get money for them. By 3 o'clock in the morning we would have cleaned the last of the rabbits and with about 75 of them in jute bags and anything else like kangaroo tails and some hind legs of a young kangaroo, we would embark on the return journey to Perth. Sitting with the three of us in the front we just worked at keeping the driver from falling asleep and of course we would take turns in driving home. It amazes me every time that we made it home after missing out of a full night's sleep. Then Sunday morning in Myaree we would split up the haul and as I supplied the ute and the petrol, I took about 2/3 of the rabbits and just one tail. After a solid bacon and eggs breakfast I would dig a hole on the vacant block next door as now I had to strip the skins off the rabbits and bury them before the flies found them and then it was a matter of washing and cleaning the whole rabbits and wrapping them in clear plastic and in the freezer they went.

Now any time that someone paid us a visit they were always offered a rabbit or two because in a month's time there would be again a fresh supply of rabbits. Needless to say that Riet had rabbit on the table at least once a week. This monthly spotlighting trip to the country was really my only relaxation that I allowed myself in my busy working life. After the rabbit cleaning, I really did need some sleep to catch up.

Cliftop was nearing completion and when on a visit to the architects Krantz and Sheldon, Harold Krantz called me into his office and had a general talk about all the activity and then after organizing coffee he offered me a large piece of cheese cake that apparently his wife had made. I was surprised at this gesture because before all our discussions had been strictly business, but I did appreciate it very much and the cheese cake was very delicious. He then mentioned that he wanted me to tender for a 14 storey load bearing project to be called HITOR (Swedish for High Tower) and it was to be built between Cliftop and The Heights along Mill Point Road. It contained 84 units and a double storey car park in front of it. I got all very excited about it as this was going to be the highest building that I had ever built, so I wanted it and three weeks later I was rewarded for many late nights of work by being the selected tenderer for this one. John was happy as it meant that he would go from Cliftop straight to Hitor. As usual we did the setting out together and because of its height the concrete footings were a lot bigger and deeper too. Often in the past we had used a crane to pour the concrete footings but on this one I got Harry in the steel shop to make me a long steel half round chute about 8 metres long that we could mount on some beams and so extend the chute from the concrete trucks in order to deposit the concrete at the required place without having to use a crane. We also used the conveyor belt machine that I had bought before when I was doing the first multi storey back in 1964

in South Perth. In the end it would save us the cost of the crane hire and this chute could be used on any of the other jobs in the future.

Another thing that I did was buy from Crommelins Machinery a 6 foot square hoist tower with the steel base, steel head structure with the hoist pulley, the platform inside the tower with the concrete kibble underneath it and the complete electric winch set with an additional winch set that could be used independently from the main winch. This second winch was for the jib that I was going to make ourselves in order to hoist up any reinforcements to the level of the concrete slabs as the building grew in height. The 3 meter vertical corner sections of the tower, the horizontal six foot ledgers, the cross braces and the joining cleats we made ourselves in the steel shop.

While the bricklayers started on the ground floor, Gus Heesters, Pieter Heesters brother, and myself started to build the hoist tower and when we got to 12 metres in height, we put the first steel tie ropes to each corner and anchored them to the concrete blocks that we had already poured beforehand at the boundaries. When we reached the top, almost 70 metres up, we had a brilliant view over the zoo and the rest of South Perth. Physically climbing up on the outside was good exercise but if you had to go for a pee, we used a bottle up top as that was a lot faster than climbing down and then up again. Now I can already hear you asking, what did you do with the bottle? I am not going to tell you but one thing is for sure we did not throw it down, Ok!

After mounting the 6 meter jib, which was quite a job, the hoist was complete. Gus Heesters had been working for us quite a while doing various labouring jobs but in particular he did a lot of the brick cutting, as was required by the engineers being load bearing brick work. I had mentioned this requirement before when I started to build The Heights. Also another Dutchman by the name of Piet de Vries who had been a regular labourer for the last couple of years then became the full time hoist driver on the Hitor job. Way back in Holland apparently when he was working on the ships he used to operate the onboard cranes so this hoist driving was not strange to him.

Piet Heesters was making good progress at Illinois in Crawley. The bricklayers on that job were Henny Veenvliet, Theo's father in law, and his mate known as Scotty with another two tradesmen and they were performing well and got on well with the foreman Piet Heesters. At that time it was the first multi storey building in the Crawley area so it was getting plenty of attention. What were becoming noticeable were the white concrete balustrades of the balconies with the corrugated look on the outside. The formwork for these balustrades were made in the joiner shop by Theo with slanted timber strips planted on the inside of the outside panel of formwork and the whole lot painted with special epoxy paint designed to last seven uses of concrete

pouring. The concrete to be used was a special white concrete with white sand and white quartz and of course white cement. Even today when driving along Mounts Bay Road past the job you can see the effect of this particular finish of the balconies at every level and it looks very unusual but classy.

One Sunday morning after church I got talking to one of the church committee members and he felt strongly about the suggestion that I should become a Councilor with the Melville City Council. He introduced me to a fellow who belonged to our Corpus Christie Parish and he was trying to impress me with the importance of me having a go at running for the Melville City Council. The way he talked to me got me interested at least and I said that I would discuss it at home with my wife and I would let them know what the outcome was. I don’t know why I was getting keen on the idea, may be it was a matter of prestige that went with it but the more that I was leaning towards this the more Riet was opposing it, to the point that we got into an argument over it that lasted for a few days.

The more that she condemned the prospect of me becoming a Councilor, the more that I started to pursue it. In the end she threatened to walk out on me and then I realized how stupid I was and that I did not have the time to get involved in this with all the other things that I was doing in my building business. I then pulled out of the race to get elected as a Councilor and in hindsight Riet was so right in objecting to my stupid dream. In the meantime she was doing a great job in looking after our brood of five helping them with their home work and doing the never ending work of cleaning the wet beds, washing and cooking and occasionally taking them to the doctor when required, a never ending routine and all that while she was growing in size with number six well on the way.

CHAPTER 12

IN NEED OF SOME MORE FOREMEN

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From some of the jobs that I was tendering for with Krantz and Sheldon, I landed one eight storey block of 48 units on the right hand side of my first one in Mill Point Road in South Perth straight opposite Onslow Street. With John fully involved with Hitor and both Bill, Pieter and Terry Bounsell also fully accounted for I really needed another foreman and as Riet and I had stayed in close contact with Riet's brother Bert Clynk, I had a talk to him to find out if he could be interested and yes he was.

So he was put in charge of the new job which was called: "One Sixty", which apparently was the street number in Mill Point Road. John would be keeping an eye on him as he was working nearby on Hitor in case Bert had a



Hitor, next to Cliftop, in Mill Point Road, South Perth.



Bert Clynk's first job at 160 Mill Point Road South Perth.

problem and as before I did the setting out with Bert as per standard procedure. At that stage we had three jobs under construction in Mill Point Road at the same time.

I maintained regular contact with Eric Richards, the Real Estate Agent, in fact for the last number of years he had invited Riet and I to his Christmas Diner party in the City. I remember one that was quite lavish in the function room of a restaurant near the Old Swan Brewery along Mounts Bay Road. He phoned me one evening and wanted to meet up with me so he came to our place as he himself lived in Applecross close by and he then told me that he had a block of sixty units on the drawing board with Krantz and Sheldon and when it was going to tender he really wanted me to build it as he and his company were the sole owners of the project. It was going to be built in Bulwer Street opposite the Perth Oval. I told him that if I were to get it I had a very competent foreman becoming available from a job in Maylands that was nearing completion.

One month later when the tenders closed I had the third best price and normally I would have missed out on this one but a meeting was called by Eric Richard with Harold Krantz and myself at the architect's office and because of Eric's insistence that he preferred me doing this job for him, the architect agreed with him and then awarded me the job. Because of its location opposite the Perth Oval to me it was good for publicity. After the handing over of the job in Maylands by Terry Bounsell we spent some time setting out the Bulwer



Waterfront Mews, 30 units at Bardon Place Maylands.

Street job and got that going straight away. It was a never ending routine of getting work, starting and then handing over at the end. I think that it would be right in saying that for me it was a hectic life style and I never got sick of it.

At number 23 in Adelaide Street in Fremantle there was an old Congregational Church that was not being used anymore and David Krantz me that they were designing a big project on it. It would be ten high containing 30 two bedroom units and 90 one bedroom u which the ground floor one bed units would be turned into smal shops for rent. It would be abou biggest development in Fremar he as usual invited me to tende



Mum passed away on the 9th of February 1969.

About a year before that missed out on a seven storey b units just off High Street on the side over-looking Fremantle. to Multiplex at that time and as I had to live with it and carry on. So was keen to get this one in the heart



84 units in Leonard Street Victoria Park.

of Fremantle and it was going to be called Johnson Court. Three weeks later I was happy to learn that I was the successful builder for this one but they still had to pull down the old church. Because of what was there before, I coded this job with C.C.F. (Congregational Church Fremantle). Time-wise it worked out well as Pieter would soon be finished at Illinois in Crawley and would go straight onto the CCF job in Fremantle.

The next thing is worth mentioning. It was Monday the 14th of October 1968 and it being a public holiday, Queens Birthday, John had the day off. So I called in at the Hitor job because the subcontractors, plasterers, plumbers and others were working on this day and therefore Piet de Vries, the hoist driver was there too, and because of that the site office was open.

I was in the site office at mid morning having a coffee when at precisely 10:58 there was a strange sound going through, eerie really, and I raced outside and looking up at the 70 meter high hoist tower I could not believe my eyes at what I saw. The hoist tower that I with Gus Heesters put together about five months ago was swaying in its full height and if not for its guy ropes holding it upright it would have toppled over. It was something that I will never forget in all my life. I soon found out that at that precise moment, there was an earthquake in Meckering, East of Northam, with a magnitude of 6.9 on the Richter scale that destroyed most of the township.

When I got home afterwards Riet was telling me that at that moment she was in the laundry and the washing machine, which had wheels underneath it, started to roll along to the other side of the laundry and it scared her quite a bit. She said it was so strange to see that happen and she did feel a tremor at



42 units at the corner of Berwick and King George Streets in Victoria Park

the same time. It became a big news item on the T.V. that evening and even today the crack in the ground over there near Meckering is still visible.

The Engineers Sheldon were very concerned and did a full inspection on site to see if there was any damage as a result of this earthquake and there were some cracks in various suspended floor slabs that needed attention. There instructions were to get a specialist contractor to treat the cracks with epoxy resin. The correct method of applying is to drill 5mm holes about 250mm apart and then by means of a high pressure gun forcing the epoxy resin into the cracks sort of welding the concrete together and in doing so preventing any moisture reaching the reinforcement inside the concrete making sure that the steel inside the concrete would not rust. The underside of the concrete slab needed to be treated the same way so that there would not be any cracks appearing in the ceilings after they had been plastered. The best contractor for this delicate work was Crommelins Chemicals who would guarantee their work to the satisfaction of the Engineers. All the other jobs under construction were being inspected and given the same treatment as Hitor got. And that was the episode of the earthquake.

On the evening of the 18th of November 1968, Riet was telling me that her time had come and that she might not last the night but she did and then we took off early the next morning using the usual route along the Kwinana Freeway to King Edward where I was sure that I was going to be presented with our first daughter.

It was amazing that the same red head bombastic nurse was still there but she had not forgotten the routine as far as me was concerned and she did

do the right thing to me as she obviously had remembered from the previous births at the delivery ward.

The same Doctor Love was in attendance again and after nearly a full day of hard work by Riet there was a reward and guess what, again it was a boy. Riet was just as happy as I was, after all he was complete and very healthy and what more do you want. Riet had a name already for him and he was to go through life as Paul Anthony born on the 19th of November 1968. A week later mother and son were home and now we had a family of six boys ranging from one week to eight years of age.

There was a worry with my mother living with Corry and Piet. Her health was starting to fail and although Corry was looking after her very well, she was growing weaker by the day. It was obvious that the task of bearing so many children in her life with all the pressures of the war years and the threats and worries during the German occupation with Dad being in the underground movement, was taking its toll on her health at this stage of her life. In the beginning of the following year Mum was hospitalized at the Royal Perth Hospital and she deteriorated fast. It was hard to see her going backwards so quickly and we all felt that she did not deserve this. All her life she had worked and looked after all her kids as they came along without complaining and now she should be able to enjoy the many grandkids that were coming along in the whole of the Oorschot family and by the looks of it she was going to miss out on all of that. It just was not fair but I suppose that is life and we all had to accept that. On the 9th of February 1969 Mum passed away in the Royal Perth Hospital at the age of 62 and was buried with Dad at Karrakatta on the 12th of February. It was a very touching affair with the whole family and many friends present. The hardest hit would no doubt be my youngest sister Anne who lost her mother shortly before turning seventeen. Anne stayed on with Corry and Piet in their Nollamara home and I must say that they both provided a lot of support for her in that difficult time.

Over the following year my youngest sister Anne, still living with Corry and Piet in Nollamara, was getting itchy feet. All her brothers and sisters were married and although she was still young, she wanted to be by herself in her own relationship, so she took it upon herself to place an advertisement in the paper.

A young fellow answered and following the phone call turned up at Piet’s place. Piet apparently answered the door and the caller, Peter Bos, first thought that Piet was Anne’s father but that was soon clarified and from there on the relationship flourished resulting in their wedding on the 28th of February 1970 where I was given the honour to give the bride away.



Johnson Court, 120 units in Adelaide Street in the center of Fremantle.

Work-wise I landed some more jobs with Krantz and Sheldon which were needed as One Sixty was nearing completion and so was Hitor while Bill had just handed over the Rhodes Hotel job with the beautifully polished jarrah finish in the restaurant area, all done by Auro Stazzonelli, our cabinet maker in the workshop in Myaree. In Victoria Park the Perth City Council, in their wisdom, had a couple of years earlier, rezoned the areas between Berwick Street, McMasters Street, Hordern Street and Leonard Street to high density development allowing projects similar to what I had been doing for the last number of years to be built there. Of course Krantz and Sheldon got on the band-wagon like everyone else did. Just before Christmas I won the contract for a 7 storey block of 84 units in Leonard Street covering the old house numbers 69—75. This would be the next job for my brother Bill to start straight after the holidays.

An architect that I did not know before, Stuckey and Quartermain from West Perth, called me and invited me to tender for an apartment block 8 stories high with 48 units along Rutland Avenue and the corner of Howick Street called Parkland Apartments in Lathlain and that tender closed at the end of January. I was as pleased as punch that I won this one as that would be the next job for John to get stuck into and shortly after Mum’s passing away, I was fortunate to land a 7 storey block of 42 units in Victoria Park on the corner of Berwick Street and King George Street and this job would be lined up for Bert Clynk when the One Sixty job was handed over.



48 units called Parkland Apartments in Lathlain.

So after the holidays Bill and I started to set out the Leonard Street job and then we found a problem just under the ground in the form of a large tree stump that the demolition people should have removed when they pulled down the old houses before us getting access to the building site. The tree must have been in-between the houses but it was now in the line of the front wall of the units and it just had to go. I got Bill to drill a number of 40mm holes on various sides of this stump while I drove home to get the jelly and detonators that I had kept in the fridge for many years and was soon preparing for the big blast in Leonard Street. We did not tell anybody about it and just blew up the stump. There was a lot of debris even on the road and after a second go at it we were able to clear it all away and continue with the setting out and proceed with the concrete footings.

Some of the neighbours in the street must have complained to the City Council and an inspector came over to investigate but after explaining the reason why, he left it at that with a warning that we could do no more blasting on the job. This was a large project with 12 units per floor and in layout very similar to the three storey one that I did near the end of William Street in 1964 when Dad was in the Royal Perth Hospital.

From here I went with John to Lathlain to start him off on the corner of Rutland Avenue and Howick Street with the setting out. This was going to be an impressive building with the fiberglass balustrade on all the front balconies against the red bricks on the outside.



The ten storey job for Eric Richards in Bulwer Street Perth.

Bert had completed the handover of One S in Mill Point Road and the seven storey on the corner of Berwick St and King George Street was ready to start, the both of us as per the u procedure spent the few days setting out one so that Bert an team could start on digging and pouring of the concrete footings as per engineering drawi Straight after this I joi Pieter in Fremantle to the setting out of John Court. This was a very large layout with 3 double bedroom units in the one block at the rear end of the project and facing the Adelaide Street were 9 single bedroom units in the one block per floor with the ground floor to be small shops. The whole lot was going to be 10 storeys high.

While all this was going on I was introduced by Harry van Os, the foreman of the steel shop, to two blokes that were in a small way making fiber glass boats. They were losing the little workshop that they were renting and were wondering if I could accommodate them behind the service garage that I had alongside the steel shop. The area behind the garage was used for storage of all sorts of equipment and I could see that there was an opportunity for me to get involved in another field that had always interested me. So I made up a contract with them about starting a new company called Oorschot Fiberglass Pty. Ltd and grouped it along all the other companies that were already in existence. With the moulds that they already had, they started to make 14 foot dinghies and 18 foot runabouts. They would be carrying the name of OOR-FLITE and Harry would be making the trailers to suit them.

I had been considering building myself a steel cruiser so the guys in the fiberglass shop put me onto a shop in Leederville where they had plans for all sorts of boats for sale and so I paid them a visit and came away with a full



My own Virginia Court project in Mc. Master Street Vic Park

set of plans for a 40 foot twin screw steel cruiser. I showed them to Harry and worked out a plan with him for constructing this cruiser.

We placed the order for two of the recommended Cummins Marine diesel motors 180 HP each so we had them in stock for mounting them in due course when needed.

It promised to be an exciting time to see this thing growing in size in the steel shop. Riet was not crash hot about it but I thought that eventually she too would like it as the kids would enjoy it in time as well.

By now it was the end of March 1969 and then something happened that we did not expect at all. Riet was sure that she was pregnant again so quickly after the birth of baby Paul. At first she ignored the tell tale signs but wanted confirmation of it and after the visit to Doctor Love again in West Perth we were informed that it was on again with the expected time of delivery of mid October.

This news was devastating to Riet but as the Doctor said it takes two to tango and as in the past, we did do a lot of tango and accepted his verdict.

It was obvious that Riet needed a break in order to adjust herself to the fact that number seven was on its way. I felt bad about the fact that it had happened so quickly after Paul but what could I do now at this stage, so I was happy for Riet to go to Holland and pay a visit to her girlfriend Ada and spend a few weeks there just as a well deserved break away from all the strain of looking after kids and the house with everything that goes with it. So before she got too big, I sent her off to Holland in April and Aggie next door took charge of our household for this time and I must say she did a marvelous job and I could

not thank her enough for i
just had a way with kids ar
course she was no strar
them as she often was
our place with her kids
trampoline and in the swim-
ming pool.
By this time the name
OORSCHOT was shown on
all the building sites and th
were:
• Terry Bounsell in Bulwer
Street-10 storey, well on t
way;
• John in Lathlain-8 storey
now three floors up;
• Bill in Leonard Street, Vic.
Park-8 storey, three floors up;
• Bert in King George Street,
Vic. Pk.-7 storey, one floor up;
• Pieter in Fremantle, Johnson Court-10 storey, two floors up.



Trelawney in Newcastle Street Leederville with the "private balcony" at the top left hand side

Understanding the importance of the continuity of jobs coming in, I kept on tendering at a regular basis on just about everything that was on offer from Krantz and Sheldon as well as other architects but I was missing out on most of them by this time.

I was starting to notice that the prices for the projects were getting very tight, leaving not a great deal of profit at the end. But in June I got lucky and won one from Krantz and Sheldon in Newcastle Street near Loftus Street in North Perth. The project was to be an eight storey of 48 units with three of the top units on the west side to be built as a penthouse for the owner who was a doctor and would have his surgery on the ground floor spread over three units also on the west side. The name for this one was to be Trelawney. They still had to pull down the old houses giving me a chance to organize things for this one including a foreman.

As all my foremen were well and truly occupied, I started to look around and my eye fell on my brother Hans, as a possibility, so I made enquiries to see if he would be interested. Although he was still fairly young, he liked the idea of becoming a foreman and as I knew that he would be dedicated and keen to prove himself, I decided to take him on as the foreman for Trelawney. Shortly



Three storey office building at 7 Havelock Street, West Perth.

thereafter we were working side by side doing the setting out as I did with all the other jobs and he was on his way.

By now we had six jobs under construction at the same time and including the various subcontractors, there were around 250 people working on all the jobs together. Nowadays the work on these type of jobs are done differently but at that time all the concrete formwork and scaffolding and carpentry work was all done on wages and as a result of that we had full control of the work flow.

Additional to that, as we made all the joinery and cupboards ourselves, we had no holdups in that regard and any steel work that was needed like balustrade and steel beams, steel lintels for over the doors and windows, they were always on the job on time. Other builders were often slowed down because the subcontractors were holding them up.

Some time ago I had organized with Harry in the steel shop to make a few 2 wheel barrow platform hoists using the first one that I bought from Crommelins Machinery as a model, including the hoist extensions. Also I got Harry to make two more complete tower hoists and as we had two steel lathes in the shop we were able to make the winches as well.

Talking about the steel shop, the 40 ft steel boat under construction was progressing well with the Cummins diesels now mounted in position and the 2 rudders manufactured and placed in position behind the two propellers. Auro was doing a great job with the interior lining, all in formica, and I paid a visit to the South Perth Yacht Club near the Canning Bridge in Applecross to see



At 365 Cambridge Street Wembley we built a complex of 72 units with a double storey car park.

if I could secure a pen to moor the boat once she was ready to be launched. I was lucky as there was one that was just then vacated and if I was happy to pay for it as from that date I could call it, “reserved for me”. You beauty I thought.

There was a lot of activity in the steel shop as Harry had been busy keeping an eye on the tender column in the West Australian where Country Shires and others were calling for steel manufacturers to tender for complete steel sheds and he had picked up a number of manufacturing jobs that way. Some were supply only and others were supply and install. When he won one of the supply and install contracts, our trucks would deliver the product with John Snyder and the Hough 50 with the crane boom on the bucket loaded on one of our trucks and a couple of steel workers to go with them to completely finish the job in the bush. We were gaining a reputation for this in the country and from one job we soon got to another by recommendation and I think that is because we were proving to be reliable and that meant a lot in the bush.

Eric Richard’s project in Bulwer Street was nearing completion and I must say that Terry Bounsell was doing a great job very much to the satisfaction of the architects and Eric himself. There were two things that were really standing out on this one and firstly it was the front facade. Where normally all the windows would be directly above each other, in this case from one floor to the next floor they would alternate in location which made it eye catching. The other thing was that normally the lift room above the lift shaft would be housed inside a brick wall above the roof level, in this case in the middle of the roof as the lift was located in the center of the building. The unusual thing was



Our steel shop was always busy manufacturing.
This load was on its way to Alcoa north of Pinjarra.

that the brick wall of the lift shaft above the roof was invisible as it was covered nearly vertical with the same red roof tiles as the rest of the roof. The tiles being the red clay Bristile ones, gave it a sort of dome effect and the architect was able to create something special in doing so.

As I mentioned before, I kept on tendering on every job that interested me but it was getting harder and harder to win anything but I did manage to win one from the architects Collin Rule and Abe Ashbel in West Perth. The job was a three storey office building with undercroft car parking at number 7 Havelock Street near Kings Park Road and it worked out just fine for Terry Bounsell to start this one after handing over Eric Richard's job in Bulwer Street. The old home that was on the site when I did the initial site inspection when I started to work out my tender price, had been cleared away and so Terry and I could do the setting out as per usual procedure and soon Terry and his gang were on the way to digging out the footings and pouring the concrete for the retaining walls and column footings.

Over the last number of years I had done well from doing my own development of units such as Cottesloe and South Perth and I started to look out for another project of my own to develop. As we were now doing three jobs in the Victoria Park area, my eye fell on a For Sale sign in front of a house on the corner of McMaster Street and Washington Street, near where I was building units now for Krantz and Sheldon.

If I was to do anything here I would need to buy the adjoining two old houses as well and after doing my calculations with the rezoning already in



This building in Hay Street is now being used for other purposes.

place, I could build a six storey development of four up-market villas per floor making it a project of 24 villas. These would all be two bedroom villas with built-in robes and better than average finishes with covered car parking for each villa. If I went ahead with this it meant another job to get stuck into and I felt that I needed to employ someone as a salesman to attend to the marketing and selling as I would be too busy to do it myself. So I made the decision to buy up the three old houses and had a meeting with David Krantz for the design of this project. I came up with the name of Virginia Court for this one. I will tell you how I got to that. I was inspired by the naming of the Crawley up-market apartments named Illinois by Krantz and Sheldon, as that name points to one of the American States and as the street name of Washington points to the neighbouring state of Virginia in America, I thought that Virginia Court would sound classy enough for this new development.



The pre-fabricated fire escape staircase being lifted in place.

Things were moving along well on all the jobs

and Riet was steadily growing in size as well and seemed to be happy in doing so. The break to Holland had done her the world of good and given her the extra energy to cope with the everyday chores with the kids and me at times, as the pressures in the building game were sometimes hard to live with. The terrible knowledge of losing my best friend Henk Werven through smoking some years previously had stopped me immediately with smoking at that time, but as the years passed and I got more and more involved in my business, the pressures of it, caused me to start smoking again while ignoring the pain of losing Henk Werven at that time. I knew that I was stupid continuing to smoke, particularly as in the mornings talking on the telephone I was coughing a lot as I often had my first smoke before breakfast. I often said that I would not buy any more cigarettes, but weak as I was, I kept on buying the bloody fags.

I had been thinking about what sort of name I could come up with for our 40 foot boat that was about to be launched. I wanted the name to be something personal and I did not want to incorporate the name Margaret in it as I still had hopes of getting a daughter yet. Now I had been at the architect's office of Krantz and Sheldon many times and they had a receptionist that was very friendly and always smiled when I called in there and I also liked her name which was Pixy.

The name Pixy would have been my second choice for a girl's name after Margaret. So as I could not see myself getting two daughters at this stage, I was happy to incorporate the name Pixy in the boat's name together with our own personal names. I came up with "he (Henk) pixy ma (Maria)" which worked out as HEPIXYMA. (When I was building our new home in Prosser Way Myaree back in 1962, I used the word Hema as the code word on all the invoices related to our home under construction so the word Hema was not a new one to me.) Jan Kruiskamp was the guy who did all the painting on our jobs and he lived just off North Lake Road near the Canning Highway. He did the sign-writing of HEPIXYMA on the bow of the boat and on the aft a couple of days before the launching.

On that day, it had to be on a Sunday because of the traffic, the boat was loaded on a low loader at the steel shop and then slowly we went via the Canning Highway to the Canning Bridge with the crane following us. I was on the boat myself with a stick with a timber cross bar to push the electric wires up as we were crossing under them. Behind the Raffles Hotel there was a spot at the waters edge to lower the boat in the water and I remember that the crane could only just manage the lift from the low loader into the water. After all it was a steel boat and therefore a lot heavier than I thought that she would be. The very next Sunday we went with the kids for a ride on the river just to get used to handling it and maneuvering it in and out of the pen at the



Virginia Court in McMaster Street Victoria Park.

Yacht Club. It was quite an experience and I could see that I had a lot to learn about handling it but it certainly was a lot of fun and the kids liked it too. I don't think that Riet was all that keen but then she was well on the way with our number seven child.

By September I had landed another large block of 72 units, seven storeys high along Cambridge Street at number 365 on the left-hand side in Wembley from Krantz and Sheldon. This worked out just right as John was getting close to handing over his job in Rutland Avenue, Lathlain along the railways. This building in Lathlain looked quite impressive with the white balconies against the red face bricks on the outside and John had done a very good job in completing it in time. This timing was always so important because most jobs had a penalty clause attached to it of a certain amount of dollars per week for late completion. Organizing the work schedule on the job by the foreman could make or break the right completion date at the end. Our work was always completed on time and part of that was the fact that no hold up by the subcontractors and suppliers were experienced and it also helped that a lot of the supplies came from our own workshops.

Harry from the Steel shop advised me that there was an invitation to tender for two steel and metal clad buildings to be built at the new Alcoa Refinery site just North of Pinjarra. This job was a complete supply and build job including concrete footings and heavy duty concrete floors. A site inspection revealed that the whole area was being worked by Bell Brothers doing all the leveling with their big scrapers and bulldozers. It looked quite an interesting job and

Alcoa had an American firm of site managers who would be doing the calling of tenders and supervising the construction in due course.

If I could get this one it could be the next job for Bill as his job in Leonard Street was nearing completion. But of course I had to know beforehand if he was prepared to go and work away as far as Pinjarra. Upon talking to him he was happy to take this one on as he was well aware that work was scarce by this time. So I got Harry to work out the steel component of the job and I would calculate the rest of it including the cost of being away from Perth. I found out that there was not a great deal of interest amongst the builders in Perth for this one but because of my set up, I was very interested. After all work was work no matter where it was and work was what I needed.

With all this going on Riet made a call on me too, letting me know after dinner on the 16th of October that she felt like a pressure cooker and that things were going to happen quickly. What I did not know was that she was fed up with the waiting and wanted to get it over with so she had taken some caster oil to hurry up the process. I organized Aggie next door to look after the kids and by 8 o'clock that night I was racing along the Kwinana Freeway when in the traffic someone else was trying to prevent me from racing along by blocking my path. In panic I opened my window and yelled to this bastard that my wife was having a baby and immediately he cleared away and let me pass through.

I got her into King Edward again for whatever prize packet she was going to offer me. Maybe it was going to be a girl this time. Riet had been saying all along that it would be a boy again but I still had quietly some hopes that she was wrong in what she thought. It all went very fast in the hospital and as soon as she was made comfortable in the labour ward, the baby was there even before Doctor Love arrived. The nurses were very capable with the delivery and we both were happy with another boy. He was born at 9:50pm being the 16th of October 1969. That also meant that the very next day was our 10th wedding anniversary and as such Riet was in hospital. His name was to be Dean Peter.

As I am used to doing calculations, I worked out that 10 years of married life equals 520 weeks and seven pregnancies at 40 weeks covers 280 weeks meaning that over our first 10 years of married life Riet was more pregnant than not pregnant. The very next day I was back in there with a bunch of orchids declaring my love for her and thanking her for being my wife and such a good mother for our children. Doctor Love was very happy with Riet and baby Dean and she was allowed a week later to return home again where life returned to normal except for one thing, there was one more child to take

care of. Over the years it had been said that Riet was so very capable and I fully agreed with that.

The fiberglass shop was turning out the 14 foot and 18 foot runabout boats quite well and in a boating magazine that was laying about in the fiberglass shop, I found an article of a popular American boat manufacturer in Seattle called Uniflite that was interested in expanding their operations into Australia. I thought about it for a while and then I telephoned them, telling them that I could be interested and was willing to come over and talk about it. Seattle is located at the very North-West of the United States in the State of Washington and very close to the water ways South of Victoria in Canada and near Vancouver and therefore ideal for a flourishing boating activity. Riet had settled down well after the birth of Dean so I felt comfortable about leaving her to pay a visit to the boating people in Seattle to find out if there was any future in doing something with them in the fiberglass boating industry. So after making sure that I could be safely away from my business for one week, I flew via Sydney over Hawaii to San Francisco and onto Seattle with my super eight movie camera. I wanted to put all I could about the manufacturing process on film so that I could show the fiberglass chaps here in our own shop how they were getting about manufacturing their product in America and no doubt I would find it all very educational.

The flight was very tiring as it was almost non stop going over-night as well. When I got there I hired a car and the next day I found my way to the manufacturing plant where I had my initial discussion with the plant manager. He showed me around the factory and explained the process and assembly of the finished product. I was impressed as hell and I thought that there was a lot more involved in this than I first thought however this was so totally different to what I had been doing in the building game. They had no objection to me filming the various sections of their fiberglass laying and associated activities. They took me out for lunch and after that I sat with two directors to discuss the possibility of how we could set up a working relationship in West Australia as part of their Company in the form of a franchise.

So far it all looked very attractive and interesting until it came to the part where they discussed and explained the financial side of the whole deal. They would not invest any money in the setup in Australia, I would have to pay them a monthly payment of 15% of our gross turnover in the form of a franchise fee and the finished product would have to be named with their name being UNIFLITE instead of what I wanted which was OORFLITE. At the end I told them that they had given me a lot to consider and thanked them for the time that they had given me and that I would get back to them after discussing it all with my people in Perth on my return there.



Alcoa Refinery job north of Pinjarra with Bill as foreman.

I decided to look around the town and of course while I was so busy with these people in Seattle, my mind was also at home where Riet was looking after all our boys and I wanted to come home with something special for her but I did not know what I could get. As I looked around in one of the shopping arcades I walked into a jewelry shop and got talking to the manager that I wanted to buy something special for my wife and in the process of talking to him I told him about our seven kids, all boys. He came up with the thought of a ring with the birth stones of the kids mounted on it. I immediately liked it immensely and then discussed the birth dates of the boys with him and he promised to have it ready in two days time just before my departure date back home.

I was as pleased as punch with the outcome of my visit to this jeweler and I had a good sleep that night knowing that I soon would be home with my loved ones. When I got home Riet was glad to see me and really loved my little surprise that I presented to her as soon as I got home. Until this day she still wears this ring on her finger as a reminder of my love for her.

Before I landed in Perth on my flight from Seattle I had come to the conclusion that I could not agree with the conditions that the directors in Seattle had presented to me and at the end I would not go into business with them but just the same it was an eye opener and I was glad that I went there if not for the ring that I brought back with me for Riet.

Hans was doing well at Trelawney in Newcastle Street and through the architects we received instructions for a variation. Although we were now six floors up, the Doctor who was going to live in his penthouse on the top floor, wanted a balcony constructed out from their bedroom on the west side with solid balustrading giving that balcony the utmost of privacy.

It soon became known that the young wife of the Doctor wanted a spot where she could do some sun worshipping without being seen and of course that knowledge was not supplied with the instructions from the architects. The workers on the job made plenty of jokes about it however the work for this was carried out with the formwork for the concrete slab cantilevering out from the main slab. This had to be constructed on the tube scaffolding that was around the building at the time. After the building was handed over and I was driving in the area and then looking up to the balcony I would wonder, if the sun was shining, would she be sunning there now or not. Just the one balcony jotting out on its own eight stories high did look odd.

We were now into 1970 and after the holidays Bill made a start at the Alcoa job after Bell Brothers prepared a large flat area of space for these two buildings and any future buildings to be constructed. The first two that we were to build were an administration building about three metres high and a large storage shed about six metres high. The Yankee site managers supplied Bill with the exact location for both buildings as they had surveyors on site full time for the purpose of providing levels to Bell Brothers. So after Bill had the setting out hurdles in place, the surveyors marked the exact position of the buildings on the hurdles and therefore there was no need for me to join Bill to help him with the setting out.

When I called in two days later at about 9:30 in the morning I was appalled at the conditions that they had to work in. Bill and his gang of three workers were huddled up in the site office unable to work at all as the easterly winds were blowing much of the loose sand about, creating a sand storm caused by the Bell Brother’s machinery. When the winds calmed down by about lunch time a lot of valuable time was lost and this was happening often out there. All you could do was live with it and do the best you could. Because of this all the footings for the steel columns had to be boxed in timber and the Yanks would not allow any extra for this. They said that’s your problem.

A couple of days later Bill was ready to pour the slab for the storage shed and as our regular grano workers from Perth were not prepared to go to Pinjarra, Bill was able to organize some grano workers from Mandurah who were recommended by someone in Pinjarra who knew them. I was not there but on the day of the pour it was hotter than expected and the grano workers were not able to do the finishing off in time before the concrete set in the hot weather to the point that the Yanks condemned the finish of the slab as not acceptable and the very next day they got a large D9 bulldozer with those large rip hooks behind it to rip the bloody lot out, reinforcement and all, and pile it all on a heap to be carted away. All this at my expense and Bill had to start all over again with the setting out and so forth. There was going to be no profit



Arundel Court opposite the Fremantle Hospital.

on this job for sure and I did not bargain for this. Part of the fault was with the grano workers as they should have had enough man power to cope with the expected weather conditions. I refused to authorize payment to the grano workers and they did not really argue much but came back to pour the second lot when it was all prepared for the second time. One week later Harry and his gang were over there to erect the steel work for both buildings so that Bill with his workers could put all the wall and roof cover on. I called in the next day after the first lot of the steel was erected and over night the harsh winds had sand blasted the bottom 4 foot of the steel columns back to bare metal so they had to hand paint them again on site.

Piet was making good progress in Fremantle and I could see that this job when finished was going to be a land mark in the area. I kept on tendering for more jobs with Krantz and Sheldon and others as well but as I had mentioned before, the building industry was getting very tight and I started to get worried a bit. However I did land another job with Krantz and Sheldon in Fremantle on the corner of South Terrace and Arundel Street. It was going to be called Arundel Court and it consisted of 57 units eight storeys high with a double storey car park.

Some time later the Fremantle Hospital was going to be built straight opposite Arundel Court. This was going to work out all right because Hans would be handing over Trelawney in Newcastle Street soon and he could go to Fremantle to make a start on this one.

I paid a visit to Havelock Street where Terry Bounsell was flat out working on the three storey office building. They had finished the top floor which was mainly a series of concrete columns around the perimeter of the concrete floor with a concrete ring beam over the top of the columns to take the roof



The IBM office in Ventnor Ave. West Perth.

structure. In doing the formwork for this ring beam they used bolts in the bottom part of the beam with plastic conduit around the bolts to prevent the formwork spreading when they were doing the vibrating of the concrete. When they then stripped the form work, the plastic conduit was left in the bottom of the concrete which was no problem as the plasterers would plaster over it and it would be completely covered.

After the roof cover was in position Terry and his workers proceeded with the construction of the ceiling and for this they had to fix an aluminium angle to the concrete ring beam and to do this they used a Ramset gun which shoots a nail through the aluminium into the concrete. This is a marvelous way of fixing anything to concrete, but on this occasion someone fired a Ramset nail through an unseen plastic conduit behind the plaster and this nail traveled through the beam across to the building next door and through a window into an office where people were working behind their desk. It caused quite a disturbance next door as it seemed as if someone was shooting at them. Of course the police got involved and it was soon concluded that it was just an unfortunate accident and thank God nobody was hurt. Terry organized with our regular glazier to replace the broken window the same day and that was the end of that.

John was doing well in Cambridge Street and was just about ready to start on the double storey car park. On this particular job, because of the layout on site, the construction of the car park did not interfere with the building activity of the main building itself saving time at the end of the job.

Because of this there was a better chance of completing this one on time and therefore not running the risk of having to pay a late completion penalty. John was very good at organizing the activities on the job and he had proven

that in the past also. Seeing that Bill was working in the Pinjarra area, I kept my eye on any possible tenders in that area and upon scrutinizing the West Australian I noticed that the Shire of Mundijong was calling for builders to tender for the construction of their Shire Offices in Mundijong. I was in desperate need of more work so I went for it and was pleased to find out three weeks later that I was the successful builder for this one. I was surprised that not many builders had shown any interest but I did. Bill was happy with the knowledge that he had a next job to get stuck into after the Alcoa job. In the meantime Bert Clynk had handed over his job in King George Street in Victoria Park and made a start at my own six storey development in McMaster Street and was progressing well. Bill Adams, the person that I took on as the salesman to promote Virginia Court, was doing his best to create awareness of what we were building in Victoria Park but initially not much was happening despite the advertisements in the West Australian and the Sunday times on alternate weekends. I think that because the economy was slowing the public in general were quite happy to sit on the fence and wait to see what was going to happen but that did not help me with my villas in Victoria Park.

I noticed that in the tender columns of the West Australian, fewer jobs were offered to be tendered for. That to me was a bad sign because with fewer jobs coming on the market there would be a severe slump in the building industry and it would also mean that there would be a lot of job losses that the growing workforce had to live with and many companies would not take on any or fewer apprentices giving the younger people less of a chance to start their working life.

Despite this I was still able to land another job by a private architect in West Perth. The job was to be at 45 Ventnor Avenue just off Hay Street also in West Perth for IBM, the computer people at that time. To me it was a prestigious job and it was three stories high with undercroft car parking and to be very solidly constructed. An old house had yet to be demolished and thereafter we had to cart away a fair amount of sand because of the undercroft car park. This sand was still going to Heirisson Island for cash with the Perth City Council. I tell you that the Hough Pay loader had done a lot of work by this time and it was the best thing I ever did in buying this one. By this time John was ready to hand over the units in Cambridge Street and to jump straight over to the IBM job in Ventnor Street. It just had to work out this way.

The job in Havelock Street turned out very well with the architect Colin Rule being very happy with the result and the way that Terry Bounsell had handled the project. The unfortunate thing was that at this stage I did not have another job for Terry to go on with and reluctantly I had no option than to let him go. I was never sorry that I took him on in the beginning as he proved

to be a good man, hard working and very trustworthy. During the time that I am writing this book, I looked up his name in the telephone book to see if he was still about and there were only two “Bounsells” in the book and one was with a T so that could be Terry. You know it was and I had a nice talk to him in High Wycombe.

At Fremantle Piet was flat out in completing Johnson Court and at the same time looking after the progress of Arundel Court. When Arundel was two stories high Hans informed me that he wished to leave as he was interested to go back to roofing with a mate. I think that part of that decision had to do with the fact it was a long way to travel from home to work in Fremantle and in a way I could not blame him. I also considered that after Arundel Court I may not have another job for him to continue with. So of course there were no hard feelings as while he worked for me, he served me well and I was very thankful for that. With a lot less jobs now on the go there was another problem looming and that was the cash flow. I was having a bit of a struggle to make sure that I had enough money in the bank by Friday to draw the wages for the weeks pay.

I will explain to you how the system worked. When a job reached a certain stage, for instance when we reached the next floor level in the case of a multi storey building, I would put in a claim for a progress payment in writing and deliver this to the architect’s office who would be required to check my claim and then provide me with a certificate for payment by the owners of the project. Often in the case of Krantz and Sheldon, they would administer the progress payment from their office as they would be the financial managers for their client so I would receive my payment very quickly with them. With many jobs on the go at the same time there would be plenty of money coming in on a regular basis and that was just nice but by this time in the middle of 1970 things were not easy at all money wise.

The steel shop was still busy with all sorts of orders and what was worth mentioning was that we made a lot of escalator frames for Otis Elevator Company. One was worth mentioning because it was to go to the corner of Murray Street and Forrest Place in the heart of Perth where it was going to be linked with the over-pass over Murray Street in line with the Carillon City Arcade. Because of the higher level of the overhead Arcade it was going to be a particularly long steel frame. To cart it as usual on one of our trucks right into the City was quite a spectacle and many people would have noticed our name on the side of the truck. John was half way through the IBM project in Ventnor Street when I was lucky enough to score another job for an architect who had his office also in West Perth. The job was at1325 in Hay Street, West Perth and the rear corner of this new job was on the same laneway as the rear corner of the IBM job in

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Early Sunday morning in Hay Street lifting a 90 ft steel truss in position.

writers amongst other things. Again two old houses were demolished before we could start and as this one also was going to have an undercroft car park and warehouse facilities we had to excavate and cart away a fair amount of sand again to Heirisson Island. However, before we could do that the adjoining house on the eastern side was built at a level higher than street level so we had no option other than to drive some sheet piling at the boundary where this house was. The vibration caused by the pile driver in driving the sheet pilings into the ground caused the house next door to get some cracks in their walls with the neighbours getting upset, which is understandable.

The footings under this house were probably not that good and could not take the vibration of the pile driver. An inspection by a building engineer ruled that it was quite safe and anyway our insurance company would cover the repair to the cracked walls. It was also realized that in the near future this house would probably make way for a new development as this was going on all along in this area. After the sheet piling was in position we could do the excavation and proceed with the footings for this job. As John was moving along in Ventnor Avenue, I asked him to also keep an eye on this one as it was so close by. One thing is worth mentioning on the IBM job that for fire escape reasons we had to construct a steel three storey staircase connected to the fire escape doors on the first and second floors. We decided to make the whole structure in the steel shop and then cart the complete staircase to the job on a semi trailer and lift it in position by a crane on the holding down bolts already on position in the concrete footings. The steel staircase was just too heavy for our own Hough 50 with the crane boom attached to the bucket.

David Brand, the Premier of West Australia, who had been in office since 1959, was having a hard time. He had been instrumental in the growing economy of W.A. since taking over from the Labour Government nearly twelve years before. There was an election coming up early in 1971 and there was a drive by the Labour Party, with John Tonkin as the Leader of the Opposition, for a change. In politics that often happens with the opposition calling for a change in government after a long run of being in power. I often wondered why because David Brand had done such a good job in improving our economy while he was there. He was later on justly rewarded for his efforts by becoming "Sir David Brand."

Piet had just handed over Johnson Court in Fremantle and was now fully concentrating on Arundel Court. There was plenty of open space alongside Johnson Court so we did not have to build a double storey car park there which helped in completing that job in time but at Arundel Court there was a need to build a double storey car park because of the lack of space around the building for open parking. My own villa development in McMaster Street with Bert Clynk was moving along well but the sale of them was not and I was getting really worried about this as normally at any of the other jobs I would be claiming progress payments but on this one I was pouring money into it out of the company's purse making my cash flow even harder to manage. We had one offer for one of the ground floor villas but with a subject sale attached to it and this subject sale was not selling either. As the jobs were completed I started to lay off people and some of them had been working for me for years, which was not easy to do, but I had no alternative.

The architect at the Remington Rand job in Hay Street was turning out to be a bit difficult to work with and so was the engineer for this job. As part of the roof structure there was a long steel truss made up from round steel tubing about 90 foot (27 metres) long that the engineer insisted to be fully shop welded.

He would not allow this to be made up in three sections and then welded together on site. This meant that a steel truss of 90 foot by 8 foot high had to be transported to the job and then lifted in position by crane on top of the steel columns. The only place where a crane would be able to lift this truss would be from Hay Street and Hay Street is a busy street at all times of the day. So we had a bit of a problem here. After I had a good look at the situation I came to the conclusion that it had to be done on a Sunday morning early, and the crane had to be in place that Sunday morning.

I worked out with Harry that by making a couple of heavy duty brackets and hanging them over the side of the truck on the right hand side, being the driver's side, and then for safety's sake, welding a couple of steel braces from

the left side of the truck body to the top of the steel truss, would keep the truss upright and safe during transportation to West Perth. After making all the arrangements with O'Connor Cranes, we made sure that all would be ready by the next Sunday morning at 6 o'clock and that Harry would be there with an angle grinder to grind lose the steel braces.

We loaded the monster of a steel truss on the right hand side of the truck on Saturday afternoon in the steel shop. The reason for mounting the truss on the right hand side was that driving on the left side of the road and with the camber in the road the truck would be leaning to the left with a load if the truss was to be on the left side of the truck. By putting it on the right hand side of the truck it would balance itself better whilst driving. We calculated that the weight of the truss was about 3 ton which was quite a bit hanging on the side of the truck.

The next morning, being Sunday, I left the steel shop at 5 o'clock on my own, no escort, but plenty of red flags at the front and the back end of the truss, driving through the streets of Myaree, along Canning Highway, over the Canning Bridge and along the Kwinana Freeway. After I got over the Narrows Bridge and started to approach the Hay Street turnoff, I saw a policeman on a motorbike, who saw me coming, and immediately stopped all traffic and allowed me to get through into Hay Street. I was lucky that there was very little traffic and because of the length that I was carrying it took a bit of maneuvering to get around street corners but I made it without any problems. What a sight it was when I got to the job with the big crane waiting ready to lift the truss into position. One hour later it was all done with the truss mounted on top of the steel columns and the crane was packing up and by 8 o'clock I was on my way home for my second breakfast for that day. It was a very unusual day which I will never forget.

There was another thing about this job that I will never forget either. Shortly after the mounting of the truss and the roof construction was finished I lodged another claim for a further progress payment to the architect. Now the normal procedure for me was to list the various items that would make up the next progress claim and then get the girl in my office to add up all the listed items on her large "Walther" adding machine and then type the standard letter applying for the next progress claim which I would then sign and had it delivered to the architect's office in West Perth. Unbeknownst to me my girl made a mistake on her adding machine and came up with a total of $10,000 more than what I was entitled too.

A few days later, after I collected the progress payment from the manager of Remington Rand, I received a call from this bloody architect accusing me of fraud because he reckoned that I had over claimed. Apparently the manager

of Remington Rand thought that the claim was a bit high and mentioned that to the architect. The architect was at fault because before providing me with a payment certificate he was supposed to check my claim and if he had done so he would have found out himself that it was too high. So instead of admitting that he had not checked the claim properly but taken it on face value, he put the blame on me in order to save his own face by claiming that I was fraudulent. He then put it in hands of the police fraud squad who of course paid me a visit at my office to investigate and to make a report about the facts of this matter. It was a few weeks later that I received a letter from the architect's solicitor, informing me that at some future date, I would be facing court to answer a fraud charge.

You can imagine what a shock that was to me and to Riet as well as that was the last thing that I expected. Now as I have mentioned before, I was a member of the Knights of the Southern Cross and once a month I had been meeting with them in their meeting rooms at the back of the travel office in Pier Street in Perth and I spoke to Barney van Praag about this matter as I was very worried on account of this fraud charge. He then introduced me to another member of the Knights by the name of John Walsh who was a solicitor and he advised me to come and see him in his offices at St. Georges Terrace to discuss the matter with him and I did the very next day.

After explaining the whole course of events to him he said that this architect was mad to pursue this and as he explained to me, fraud is when you go about on purpose to deceive someone and as in this case, it was a genuine mistake, and it just would not stand up in court. He told me that when the time came for me to appear in court, he would represent me and look after me. He said that is what being a member of the Knights of the Southern Cross means and that is looking after each other in times of need.

After my visit to his office I felt a lot better and when telling Riet about what he said to me she was also a lot more at ease. Time would tell us in the future what was going to happen.

With Virginia Court finished and all the promotion that we were doing to attract buyers, not much was happening. Amongst the jobs being offered to tender and the ones I tried hard to land, there was one for the State Housing Commission. It was for two double storey blocks of units in Langford and I was fortunate enough to land this one.

The last time that I had any thing to do with them, was when I did a group of 9 houses in the Commonwealth Games Village back in 1962 and the Leeuwin Barracks extensions in 1965.

Bill finished the Shire offices in Mundijong and handed them over and as I had no more work for him he left our employ. I decided to look after Langford

myself as it was not such a big job compared with the multi storey buildings that we had done in the past.

By the end of the year I tendered for a large job, the Psychiatric Unit at the University of W.A. in Crawley near Nedlands for the PWD (Public Works Department). At about the same time Harold Krantz invited me to tender for a large office block 10 stories high in load bearing brick work in Adelaide Terrace in East Perth not very far from their own office. This was good news and I can assure you that I did my best under the present difficult times with all that tough competition around, to get at least one of them.

Because of the Christmas holiday period, I had more time available and as both tenders had to be submitted by the end of January in 1971, I was prepared for it. The University job closed first and I was jubilant when I found out that I was the successful builder for the project. I was told there and then that I would be called in shortly to discuss the job with the PWD's works manager.

Three days later the Krantz and Sheldon office block job closed and again I was able to beat the opposition much to the delight of Harold Krantz. Boy did I feel good about this and Riet and I had a good drink that evening to toast to a better future. I had been having trouble paying my creditors at the normal 30 day trading basis but was at this stage able to keep them at bay but it was not easy and with knowledge of two big jobs coming in, it looked very promising, also in the eyes of the creditors.

With Virginia Court in McMasters Street finished now and forced to let Bert go, both John and Piet nearing the completion of their jobs, something had to happen and by God it did.

CHAPTER 13

DISASTER STRUCK

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Leading up to the election on Saturday the 20th of February 1971 there was a lot of mud slinging against the Liberal Government of David Brand by the Labour Party under the leadership of the Opposition Leader John Tonkin. A per usual, leading up to the election, lots of promises had been made to entice the voting public into swinging towards the Labour Party. It was not uncommon after a long period of being in government, (Premier David Brand had an uninterrupted run of 12 years from 1959), that there was a call for a change and John Tonkin was taking full advantage of that call. Amongst other things his political campaign centered on giving the impression that he was an honest politician and this increased his popularity with the people. In fact the history books often referred to him as “Honest John”. It was clear by late evening on that fateful Saturday that the Labour Party had won the election. I had to live with that decision although at that moment I had no idea what was about to happen to me and my business. By the time that the new government was sworn in and the various ministerial positions in place, things started to happen to the building industry.

I was anxiously waiting to hear from the PWD about my University job and after I had heard nothing, I could not wait any longer so I contacted them. I was told that there were a number of meetings in progress about various projects that were pending and I would be informed shortly.

During this waiting to hear from the PWD, I got a call from Harold Krantz asking me to call in at his office. So that afternoon I went to see him and then it hit me when he told me that the big office job that I had won was not going ahead. The Singaporean group of investors, who were going to finance the project, had no faith in the Tonkin Labour Government and had decided to withdraw from their commitment to finance the job. Harold was just as sorry as I was but there was nothing that he could do. He could not change the

facts as they had presented themselves. And then when I got back to the office there was a message for me to phone the work's manager of the PWD and he then informed me that he had been instructed by the new minister for Public Works that the job that I had won by tender about a month ago, was going to be deferred indefinitely, meaning that I had lost that one also.

This was turning to be a very dark week for me and when I got home and told Riet what had happened that day we were both very worried for the future as we had a family of seven kids to look after and that was going to be a lot harder by the looks of it.

Ironically I had thought about a month before when I landed those two jobs, we should have waited before having that drink and toasting to the future. Even with the change of government I did not foresee losing those two so important jobs. The only consolation that I could see was that I was not the only one affected by the change of government. Many builders were crying loud, as I did, as many other jobs fell through for the same reason. The papers were reporting many such cases and it did not look good for the new government. Many suppliers were demanding cash before delivery or demanding bank guarantees which also slowed things down a lot. There were still some jobs available to be tendered for but instead of the usual six to eight applicants wanting to apply for plan and specifications, there would be at least twenty going for the one job. It became a race for survival. If you could get no more work, you would be finished in the building industry. Often someone would be prepared to work for less than the net cost meaning putting money into the job just to create a cash flow and in doing so, trying to survive for better times. Now that was possible if you had spare cash and some companies probably were in such a lucky position, but I did not have that sort of spare cash as I did nothing else than expand with the profits that I had earned during the hay days.

In hindsight it was easy to say that that was a mistake but who could predict what was going to happen at the election time. David Brand had seemed destined to be there forever as he had been doing such a great job in promoting the mining activity up North.

By this time Arundel Court in Fremantle, where Piet was, was nearing completion and so was Remington Rand in Hay Street where John was getting close to completing the job, while the units in Langford were also progressing well. There was another big job on offer to be tendered for and that was the new multi-storey Police Head Quarters in East Perth opposite the WACA grounds and as was expected every Tom, Dick and Harry went for that one and so did I.

Maybe I got lucky. Four weeks later I found out that the job was taken by Multiplex way below what I considered to be the cost price. That was proof to me that the building industry was going mad and that my future started to look very glum. In my business the daily accounting was done in my own office, by Nick Berkelaar, who was before one of my truck drivers. The end of the year accounting and taxation work was done by an accounting firm in West Perth. It was a yearly routine that we were used to. But in these troubled times things changed.

The West Perth accountants became more involved probably because some of the creditors must have been getting worried. With very little money coming in and what did come in went first to the wages of the small work force that we still had, most of the creditors were only getting a promise to get payment in the near future. In most cases the supply was cut and that made it even more difficult to carry on with the work on the jobs.

By early April the West Perth accountants called for a meeting of creditors in a meeting room in West Perth seeking support from the creditors to get behind me to help me to survive this situation. The accountants explained that there were plenty of assets in the form of the Virginia Court Villas, all of our factory buildings, the vacant block on the corner of North Lake Road and McCoy Street, the leased land to the car wreckers, vehicles, plant and equipment and the knowledge and ability of me to carry on as a builder in the future.

They explained that at this stage with a declared bankruptcy the creditors would get 87 cents in the dollar. At the end of the meeting they asked for a vote and 88% voted that they would support me with the condition that I carried on and continued to get more work to keep the cash flow going.

There was also a proviso that whatever work I did manage to get had to be jobs with a profit margin and not jobs with a loss margin as many builders were getting jobs under the cost price and that fact was well known around the industry.

The meeting closed with a new meeting date set for six months later to evaluate the progress so far. This meeting was a new experience for me and I was pleased that the creditors had shown some faith in me although one of them, the manager of Calsill Brick was very negative and seemed to have it in for me.

With a renewed hope and energy to survive, I went for every job that was on offer in the newspaper and spent a lot of evening time as well, preparing my tenders for the jobs that I had picked up the plans and specifications for.

But no matter how hard I tried to win anything, the effort on my side did not produce anything at all and as I was staying in touch with the West

Perth accountants reporting my progress, they then decided to call the next creditors meeting ahead of schedule as they thought that there was not much hope of saving the business at this stage.

At this point Theo was getting very disappointed with the turn of events and decided to pull out and leave me. He probably realized that shortly he would be sacked along with the others that were still with me and I could not blame him for making this decision as he had a growing family to look after. He had been with me for the longest time, working and managing the joinery shop, and had done a tremendous job in doing so and I have always appreciated what he had done for me over the years. At the second creditors meeting it was decided to put my entire business into liquidation and finish the Langford job to completion. Piet and John were kept on at this stage merely to complete the last workings in the shop and for John to do any running around. Nick Berkelaar was going to be replaced by one of the office staff from the West Perth accountant's office. It was all a very sad affair and something I had never dreamed would ever happen to me.

One week after all this had happened, I got a phone call from a fellow by the name of Adrian Doesburg. He wanted to see me and when meeting up with him he invited me to attend a meeting at 111 Hay Street, Subiaco at 8 o'clock the next evening. He described it as a golden opportunity and it would be worth my while to attend it. So I did go to this meeting and it turned out to be a presentation of house hold cleaning products that were child safe, fully biodegradable and therefore did not pollute the environment. On top of that they showed you that there was an opportunity to get involved in the marketing management by building up a network of distributors selling these products through the party-plan method and then earning a percentage on the product turnover.

To start at the management level it needed an investment of $3,000 and that would start you off as a Direct Distributor, working then in the organization of the person that introduced you, who had now moved into the position of a General Distributor. That would be the ultimate goal to work to for me as the General Distributor could earn enough money to support a family. This was now imperative with my building company collapsing around me.

Two things got my interest and that was the safety angle of the product and the earning potential that was available. It appealed to me and all that I needed was $ 3,000 to start as a Direct Distributor. Now since the first meeting of creditors and the subsequent failure to secure any more work, I had started to save as much money as I could by various means as I realized that there could be a money shortage in the near future for me and in situations like these you had to think ahead. Riet was not so sure about all this and did say so

but I got very excited about Golden Products as I saw it as an opportunity for me to provide for my family as that was most important to me. So I decided to sign up as a Direct Distributor and paid the $3,000 and the next day I received quite a number of boxes of product and paper work for starting my own distributorship to sell these products through the party plan method. I also started doing my own parties, demonstrating the quality of the product.

Every Saturday afternoon, they had in the meeting hall at 111 Hay Street, Subiaco training sessions, incorporating product knowledge and sales techniques and I must say it was all very impressive and convincing.

For the last couple of years I had become a heavy smoker again as I may have mentioned before and on one of these product training sessions a chap from Sydney was over to do this session. His name was Darryl and he was a huge man and jokingly he would say that he got his clothes specially made by Abdul the tentmaker. But he was very passionate about the biodegradability of their products and then, and I will never forget this, he drew a parallel with people polluting our waters and what people were doing by polluting themselves by smoking. He came over so strong and he was really emotional about what he said and then I thought, man you are so right. Here I was smoking and coughing like hell, knowing that it was not good for me and I was doing nothing about it at all. He was so right and from that day onwards I stopped smoking and never touched another cigarette again for the rest of my life and I know for a fact that if I had not stopped on that day and continued smoking, I would not be around here now writing this book about my life and my family. A week later I introduced my sister Jan and her husband Joe Urlings and they also became a Direct Distributor and I moved up to become General Distributor allowing me to earn more money as I built up my network of distributors.

As there was no more work for the steel shop, Harry was also dismissed and the steel shop closed down for good as did the fiberglass shop and the two men in it. My presence at the yard was from here on virtually ignored as if I was not part of it any more and the ute that I was driving all the time stayed in the yard. The whole thing started to become vicious with the West Perth accountants now being appointed the Receivers and Liquidators. I understood now that their duty was to get as much money together as possible for the creditors and therefore they did things to me and my family that really did hurt.

Our own car, which really was Riet’s car, for her to use with shopping and for the kids, was confiscated but we were allowed to buy it back at market value. From the day that our oldest son Terry was born Riet had opened savings accounts for all the kids, as they came along, with the Commonwealth Bank in Applecross. These accounts were in all the kid’s names so that when the

child endowment money came in from the government it was deposited into these savings accounts. The Official Receivers demanded these bank books of all the kids from Riet while I was not home and then in their capacity as Receivers, cleaned out these accounts and put all that cash into the big pot for the creditors.

When I was told of this that evening I knew that this was wrong and after enquiring with my solicitor friend from the Knights of the Southern Cross, John Walsh, he soon confirmed my suspicion that they had no right to do this and with a letter from John Walsh they were forced to pay back what they had unlawfully taken from our kids savings accounts.

A number of other things were taking place. First they demanded the key and other ownership papers of our boat as they said that I was not allowed any further use of the boat. Secondly because way back when I formed the first Oorschot Builders Pty Ltd company, the creditors that I had been dealing in my own name before, insisted that Riet and I would personally guarantee the accounts of the company and as I understood their request at that time as necessary in business, I never dreamed what this would mean to our own home. Our home now became part of the assets that the Receivers could and would claim to be included in the total of the assets to be sold for the benefit of the creditors. That meant that we were given a month notice to vacate our home and that was very painful.

Riet and I were both devastated and we visited the local Real Estate Agent making enquiries into getting a rental home and they gave us an address in Willagee, thinking that way the kids could keep attending the same school were they were going to now. When we went there, it was a three bedroom fairly basic home, and the lady that was living there, and who owned it said: “no way”, when she found out that we had seven kids. The Real Estate Agent made us realize that it would be hard to find a rental in a hurry as most people would object to a large family with seven kids as we had just found out ourselves. The only other way would be to buy a home but I had no money for a deposit and I was sure that I would not get a mortgage anywhere being a bankrupt.

So in desperation I called in at the travel agent in Pier Street in Perth where the Knights of the Southern Cross had their office and had a talk to our friend Barnie van Praag. After explaining my predicament he promised that he would look into it and get back to me as soon as possible and he did. He phoned me that same evening and told me that with the Knights’ assistance they would be able to lend me $20,000 for a period of three years on a fixed term paying interest only, if I could come up with $5,000 deposit. For a total of $25,000 I should be able to buy a three bedroom home somewhere and they pointed me in the direction of a Kevin Sullivan, who was also a member of the

Knights of the Southern Cross. He had his own Real Estate Agency in Perth. At this point of time I did not have $5,000 lying around. I had some of it but not anywhere near all of it. When you are desperate you have to take desperate measures and so I paid a visit to some people that I had met in business over the last ten years and got friendly with and explained to them my situation and they understood my plight. I was able to get the deposit together which I was able to put down for the house that Kevin Sullivan showed us in Modillion Avenue in Riverton.

The next step in winding up our business was the auction in Myaree of all the workshop machinery, equipment like scaffolding, formwork items, hoists and vehicles. It was a very trying time particularly as during the auction, the auctioneer referred to the heaps of scaffolding fittings as heaps of one hundred fittings while in fact these were heaps of one thousand fittings. By doing this he was selling them, no giving them away for almost nothing and when I started to point this out to him, he instructed one of his helpers to remove me from the auction.

You can understand how I felt after that sort of treatment, it really hurt and in isolation I don't mind admitting it that I cried. The fact was, that this really was the end of it all and it was very hard to accept and at that stage I could not get away from there fast enough. One week later when the purchase of the house in Riverton was complete, we moved away from our home in Prosser Way and settled into the three bedroom house with double decked beds for the kids. We did take the trampoline with us and dug it into the ground in the back yard and I put up a shed in the back as well to store my Golden Products boxes and other garden stuff and so on.

It had been a terrible time and there was nothing that I could do now but to make the best of it and put all of my energy into my Distributorship of Golden Products. After all I had a family to support and this was my only option. About two years before, we had bought a block of land near the beach in Golden Bay halfway between Fremantle and Mandurah. At that time we paid a deposit of $500 and as that area was still being developed, the settlement was deferred until the title deeds became available. It was shortly after we moved to Riverton that the time came to settle for the Golden Bay block but as I had no money, I had to let it go and we had to say goodbye to the deposit. Just too bad that was. The boys had settled down well after the biggest upset in their young lives but I was sure that they would survive the change from their comfortable home in Prosser Way to this rather cramped home in Modillion Avenue.

In one bedroom they had two double decker beds and in the other bedroom one single and one double decker bed. This was rather over crowded

but you know the boys never complained. I think that they all understood the horror of our situation and were prepared to accept and make the best of the circumstances and to live with it. For Riet it was a lot harder. Having to live with the humiliation of our loss of the business and then having been forced out of our home at the end was heart wrenching for the both of us. In those days I often wondered what would have happened if only bloody John Tonkin had not come into government earlier that year. Little was I to know that he and his Labour Government were only going to last one term and that the Liberal Government would take over four years later to repair the damage done to our economy by John Tonkin and his government.

I did very much admire Riet for supporting me in these troubled times and she proved to be a very strong woman in the way she went about looking after me and our kids whilst I knew that at times it was not easy for her.

Golden Products was taking off here in Western Australia, giving anyone that was willing to work at it and for really a small investment, to have a part time income with good products. I am a great believer of free enterprise where anyone gets a chance to improve oneself but only if you are prepared to work at it. The problem was that the system of Golden Products was unintentially allowing new people to come into the business to concentrate on just recruiting new Direct Distributors without putting emphasis on demonstrating and selling the products.

It did not take long for those people, who oppose free enterprise, to label our activity as pyramid selling and as such create an atmosphere of negativity about this business. You just have to look at any organization around, whether it is the church or a large corporation or even my own building business, where there is one person at the top with some delegating people underneath this top level manager and then a spread of workers actually doing the work underneath them. Does that not also look like a pyramid? It is well known that anybody going into a small business for themselves, is not guaranteed to be successful and it is also known that 75% of them fail to make a go of it and often become bankrupt in the process. And these things happen without anybody criticizing that.

As I said before, I am a great believer of free enterprise and in case you did not know, in the early days of the American history, a free trader was allowed to hang a shingle over his door depicting the form of a pyramid with an eye at the top of it, the eye being the master watching and guiding over his business with its various layers of levels of workers under his direction. The particular graphic of this shingle is shown on every American Dollar emphasizing the spirit of free enterprise and I have kept one American Dollar in my wallet ever since I joined Golden Products because of this fact. If you have never had the

opportunity to have a good look at such a Yankee Dollar you need to do so in order to understand what I just have explained to you. The training provided by the management of Golden Products was very good.

I got very excited about the quality of these cleaning products and I was able to pass on this fact to my growing amount of customers and distributors that I had started to accrue in my own organization. Every evening at the address in Hay Street there were these opportunity meetings, where anyone who was a distributor in the organization, could bring along people that wanted to know more about what Golden Products was all about. At this meeting they demonstrated the quality of one of the cleaning products and showed how, if you were prepared to work, and they put a lot of emphasize on the word WORK, you could earn some interesting money part time.

Once a month on a Saturday afternoon they would conduct a Direct Distributor school for the new and existing Direct and General Distributors. These sessions focused on the power of positive thinking and the mental attitude of your mind. If you think that you can succeed and believe in yourself, it is amazing what you can achieve, but you must believe that you can do it. Many people allow others to tell them that they can't succeed and then do nothing about bettering themselves. You become what you think about. Therefore if you think about success, success should come your way. You are the master of your own destiny. Yes, I learned a lot from the philosophies of Golden Products and their positive thinking surely helped me through my very negative world of losing everything that I had worked so hard for over the previous 12 years.

Thank God I still had a good wife and family that had stuck with me so far. On the Sunday mornings they conducted speaker training sessions to help anyone who was interested in improving himself to eventually get up and do the evening presentation of the opportunity meetings.

I felt that it was part of my growing commitment to better myself for the benefit of my family and I was prepared to participate in these training sessions on the Sunday mornings.

Terry was the first son to go to the Christian Brothers School along High Street in Fremantle back in 1969. Now Terry, Jeff and Kevin were travelling by bus every morning together to Fremantle, while Tim and Chris were attending the local primary school in Riverton, with Paul and Dean still being at home with their mother. It made it a bit easier during the day for Riet until all the kids got home again by late afternoon.

It was in the middle of 1972 that out of the blue I received a letter from John Walsh, my solicitor, saying that I had to appear in court to answer to the fraud charge that was pending by the architect of the Remington Rand job in

Hay Street, West Perth. I had not thought of it any more as so much had passed since the first charge was laid against me but he asked me to call in at his office to discuss it further with him. So two days later I was at his office and we went in detail over what I could expect from the prosecuting attorney and he said just to stick to exactly the truth as it happened at that time. He also suggested that I talk to a few people that I had business dealings with before and ask them if they would be prepared to be a character witness for me. The court hearing was set for four weeks later on a Monday morning at 10 am. When I got home I thought of who I could ask to be a character reference in court and I thought of Harold Krantz, Eric Richards and two of my friendly creditors, who had helped me to get the deposit money together for the Riverton house. When I approached them, all four were more than happy to oblige and Harold Krantz said that he would get his son David to attend the court hearing as on that day he was engaged in a meeting and David had, as much as he himself, had dealings with me in all the years that we had been associated with on the various jobs.

I was more than elated with their responses and both Riet and I were relieved to receive the good will that they showed us in this so terrible affair. On the day of the hearing Riet drove me into Perth to the court room but she could not stand to be in the court room listening to this whole procedure. She would not stay there to watch and listen to the false accusations of an architect that had not done the right thing during the course of his business and who was so keen to point the finger to someone else while he should be pointing the finger to himself.

The first thing that took place in the court room was the selection of the jury which took about one hour and then I was asked to take a seat in the defendant’s box. The Prosecutor then addressed the jurors telling them that it was simply a case of deliberate fraud, designed to extract more money from the owners of the project that he was building in West Perth as he badly needed the extra money as his building company was cash strapped.

Then my solicitor, John Walsh, approached the jury assuring them that during the course of the proceedings they would be shown that all this resulted from a genuine mistake which could not be charged as fraud and therefore the case should be dismissed as not guilty in their verdict.

With that the court proceedings started with the prosecutor calling the first witness, being the architect himself, who had started all this in the first place. The architect explained that the builder had presented his progress claim for the next section of work completed on the Remington Rand project and that in good faith had accepted this claim to be correct and therefore had issued a payment certificate for payment by the owners of the project being

constructed by the builder. This was a normal and correct way of going about making a payment for work done under a building contract. The prosecutor had put a lot of emphasis on the fact that the architect acted in good faith and that the accused had taken advantage of this in his presentation of this claim for payment. It was obvious that the prosecutor was trying to impress the jury in doing so.

When it was my solicitor's turn to examine the architect, he asked if it was a normal procedure for an architect to provide a certificate for payment without checking if it was correct. The architect answered by saying that if on the first glance it seemed all right, he would provide a certificate as he was short of time and he thought that the figure on the claim appeared within range. It was after the owners of the project had queried the amount, after the payment was made to the builder, that he had carefully checked the claim and found that it was over by $10,000. Then my solicitor asked him if he had made this careful examination of the claim in the first place, would he then have reduced the amount on the payment certification by this amount of $10,000 and he said that he would have done so.

At this time my solicitor pointed out to him that he had neglected his duty to his client by not carefully checking the claim document and therefore was guilty of not carrying out his duties as an architect. He then pointed out that he, to save his own skin with his clients, the owners of Remington Rand, had had no option but to blame the builder for this run of events. In any case, he said, at the next progress claim you no doubt would have adjusted the discrepancy. And he finished by saying no further questions.

Then the prosecutor called for the accused to take the stand and I was told to take the seat where the architect was seated before and as with the architect I was also asked to swear on the Bible to say nothing else but the truth. After stating my name in full, the prosecutor asked me all sorts of questions and how I got to the amount of money that I claimed on the progress claim. He wanted to find out how did I get to that amount. I then told him that I started from the previous claim, determining what sections of the job were completed at that time and what had been done since the last claim. I would then list all the items that had been done on the job with their appropriate money values and then give it to my girl in the office. She would then add them up on her large "Walther" adding machine and then type out a standard letter that we used every time for progress claims and then I would get it back to sign. Over the years this had been the standard procedure in our office and over the years I would have claimed for hundreds of progress payments in the same manner.

The Prosecutor then pointed to me, and said very accusingly, that I had on purpose over stated this claim as I needed money badly. All that I could

do at that time was to deny this strongly as I knew that I was telling the truth. He then said that he had no further questions. By this time the Judge ruled that it was time to break for the day. The prosecutor then asked the judge what arrangements had been made for the accused for the night as he was objecting, on behalf of his client, that he did not want the accused (me) to be free overnight in case I would disappear before the court resumed in the morning and therefore he asked for me to be kept in security overnight. The judge I suppose had no option than to agree with this request and ordered this request to be carried out. I understood that people had disappeared overnight before, throwing the court process into chaos.

There was nothing that John Walsh could do as there was a risk in letting me go home for the night. John knew that in my case there would be no risk but he had to abide by the rules. I could not believe it really and all I could do was ask John to call Riet and get her to bring a bag with clothes and toiletteries to the East Perth lock up at the Police Head Quarters opposite the WACA grounds where I was to spend the night. Riet was devastated and shocked by the news and I would have to admit that this was a very low point in my life to spend the night in jail. And then to think, that only a few years before, that I had tendered to build this place and then missed out to Multiplex.

At the court building they put handcuffs on my wrists and put me in a police paddy wagon and drove me to the East Perth Police Station where I had to empty my pockets which they put into a brown paper bag. Then they took me up to the seventh floor where I had to strip off completely and was strip searched and then ordered to have a shower and was given prison clothes to wear before being led to my prison cell. It was all so degrading as if I was a common criminal. All this was happening to me because this bastard of an architect was not man enough to admit that he had made a mistake by not checking the payment claim when he was supposed to do so. The cell itself was not very exciting either with a steel framed bed with grey blankets, a small table and steel chair and a stainless steel toilet without a lid in the corner of the cell. All in all it was not very inviting. By six o'clock we were all summoned to the dining room for the evening meal which was nothing special but it was edible although under the circumstances you can understand that I was not very hungry and just picked at the food. Naturally I looked around and took notice of the people that I was having my meal with and I did feel very much out of place as most of them were just the no hope type of people that seemed to be in trouble all the time and therefore spent a lot of time in these surroundings.

During my meal my mind wandered off to Riverton where my loved ones were sitting around their table while I was sitting here with the low life of the

earth as company and I must say that I felt very sorry for myself and I could not get out off here fast enough. I knew that I should be home the next evening with my own family as company. I was told that after dinner there was some time to mingle and take some reading material to our cells. The lights would go out at 9 o'clock at night and the next morning, they told us, at six o'clock the bell would waken us and then we would be taken to the shower rooms and then afterwards to breakfast at 8 o'clock.

So when we were back in our cells I tried to read the magazine that I had picked up but I was not really reading it. I thought that if I got to bed I might get some sleep and that would pass the time until the next morning. So I opened the bed covers and then I noticed that there were no sheets at all and you would be lying on grey blankets and seeing that, I thought, who else had been on these blankets before me. I could not imagine that these blankets had been washed before they had made up this bed and then I was not looking forward to going to sleep on what I saw before me, but I had to, as I was tired and needed to be rested for the court hearing to continue the next morning. I got under the blanket in my undies but I soon put on my prison clothes as it was just too itchy. Whether that was from the blankets alone or may be from some wild life that was living in the blankets, I did not know, but I needed the sleep.

The bell went at 6 o'clock in the morning but I was well awake already and then we were directed as a group to the showers. These turned out to be a large tiled room with 10 shower outlets side by side and there I was amongst all the rough looking blokes trying to wash myself the best I could. I tell you that was quite an experience and a half and it was just as well that there was a supervisor nearby watching that nothing untoward was going on in there. I was glad when that was over and I was fully dressed for the breakfast session afterwards, which was just toast and jam with tea in metal mugs.

As I had to be in court that morning, I was taken down to the ground floor, now in my own clothes, and kept in a holding cell and then they came for me, put on the handcuffs again and placed me in the back of the police paddy wagon. When we got to the court building they led me to the holding cell at the ground floor to wait there for the 10 o'clock start of the continuation of the court proceedings. Towards 10 o'clock they led me into the court room and sat me beside John Walsh and only then did they take off the handcuffs, much to the annoyance of my solicitor who made it known that there was no need for those handcuffs at all.

When the judge entered the court room I was asked to take the stand again and was reminded that I was still under oath to tell the truth. As the prosecutor on the previous day had no further questions, it was now my solicitor's turn

to question me. He got me to confirm the procedure that I used for making a claim for payment as I had already outlined the previous day to the prosecutor and again I stated that the mistake was obviously made by the girl in the office with the adding machine. Then I was asked to step down and take my seat next to the solicitor's bench and then John Walsh called for the four witnesses to take the stand and one after the other he asked them what their opinion was about the accused here present in the court room. All four of them gave a very good character reference as to the honesty and trustworthiness of the accused and that they had known this person for more than ten years. Just to hear this being said in court made me feel good and helped me to try to forget what I had been through during the last night in jail.

Now both the prosecutor and my solicitor were given the opportunity to present their final speech to the jury and again the prosecutor drove his argument to the jurors about the fraudulent act of the accused while John Walsh simply explained as he had done before, that in law a mistake can never be ruled as fraud. It was just as simple as that.

And then the judge addressed the jury and this was what he said. I want you all to retire to the jury room and consider your verdict and I instruct you to come back to this court room with a unanimous verdict of not guilty. It was very silent in the court room as nobody really believed what they heard. Then the jury was led to the jury room by the court attendant and John Walsh turned to me and said that this was very unusual to happen.

The jury was back in the court room ten minutes later and when asked by the judge what the verdict was, the foreman of the jury answered: "Not Guilty". The judge then instructed the plaintiff to pay for all the court costs including the cost of the solicitor of the accused and thanked the jury for their attendance and service and told me that I was free to go and following that said case dismissed and hit his desk with his gavel. I was stunned by the judge's action and I asked John why he had done this and his answer was that he simply wanted to prevent a miscarriage of justice as you never knew with a jury.

I was as pleased as punch though as now the architect who had caused all this bullshit had to pay for the lot and that no doubt would amount to many thousands of dollars and I did not have to pay for anything. I phoned Riet to let her know the outcome and could she please come and pick me up. I also expressed my thanks to John Walsh for the way he had handled everything in court and also I thanked Barnie van Praag for his assistance and that of the Knights of the Southern Cross in this so difficult a time. At least I could sleep in a nice, warm bed tonight which would not be itchy either.

I was doing well in the Golden Products business and was able to earn enough money to provide for my family. There were not many General

Distributors that were working full time and of those that were, some had wives that were also earning incomes. As things progressed I started to participate in doing the opportunity meetings in the Hay Street meeting rooms and then one day, a fellow from Sydney, came over to take charge of the activities in Western Australia. His name was Frank Williams and his wife's name was Cathy. He was from Dutch parents and from the start he fitted in well with all the distributors here and they both took a liking to the both of us. Before he started to be a full time distributor in Sydney he was a panel beater working for himself in a small workshop.

At one stage there was a competition, organized by Golden Products, based on the total turnover of product in a particular month and that included also the turnover of installing Direct Distributors in your own organization as a General Distributor. The winner (and their partner) would be flown to Bathurst to watch the famous car race as Golden Products had sponsored a car.

I was keen to win this and as in the past, when I was chasing work when I was a builder, I worked hard at it and when the announcement was made who the winner was it was me who had won the competition and I was to go to Bathurst with Riet coming along as well. Frank and Cathy, being in charge of W.A., were also going there as a reward for doing such a great job here in the West. It turned out to be a great long weekend and a welcome break after all the hard work and not to forget all the trauma of this blasted court case before.

CHAPTER 14

BACK TO HOLLAND

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Towards the end of 1973 Frank approached me on how I would feel about being asked to move to Holland with him and Cathy to help out in getting Golden Products established properly there. At the moment there were only English speaking people there and they had to work with translators to do the opportunity meetings and that was not very successful. What he was saying was that they were struggling to get off the ground. What they needed out there were some people that had proven themselves already in this business and who could speak the Dutch language. Now I knew that Frank could speak Dutch, but not all that good and I could speak it OK. So with me at his side we should be able to get things fired up and that was exactly what the top management was hoping that we would achieve. I of course discussed it with Riet and at first she would not have a bar of it. I suppose it had to grow on her and for me, well I was interested if not just for the fact that being a bankrupt, a lot of people just did not talk to me much. I sort of got snubbed a bit and I was not used to that, after all the success that I had had in the past. Maybe it was a chance of a new adventure that got me interested. Frank was planning to go there by the middle of February next year being 1974 and they would pay for my airfare. It would be impossible for Riet and the kids to come along with me at the same time plus the fact that I wanted to see first if it was going to work out and I did not want to uproot the family if it would turn out to be a fiasco. Frank would be renting a house and I would be living with them and paying board just to cover my food bill.

There was a General School in Brisbane in January and at this event it was announced that Frank, Cathy and I were to go to Holland to help expand the Company there. They made a big deal of it and we received a lot of congratulations for this move to Holland. I made arrangements for all of my distributors to be looked after by someone else from the time that I would be going with Frank and Cathy in the middle of February. By now I had made a considerable

amount of money of which I left most of it with Riet. If things were going to work out in Holland and I would know within a few months after settling in, we would start planning for the whole family to join me in Holland. It certainly was a challenge but all my working life I had taken on challenges and succeeded in what I was after.

After saying goodbye to Riet and the kids at the airport with the promise that I would stay in touch on a weekly basis to report on how I was getting on, the three of us took off on a direct flight to Amsterdam and landed at Schiphol airport.

Not much had changed since we were there eight years before when we had made that trip around the world. We were met at the airport by the accountant of Golden Products in Holland. His name was Henk Buiter and he took us straight to their office in the northern part of Utrecht, which is about 30 km south of Amsterdam. We were given a tour of the building which had a large warehouse on the ground floor with a store man and a driver who did the delivery of the products around the country. Upstairs there was office space with two ladies assisting with the administration and a good size meeting room which was being used for the presentation of the opportunity meetings and also for the training sessions on the Saturday afternoon.

Although my flight to Holland was paid for, from there on I had to support myself from the earnings that I made by building up an organization of distributors like I had done before in Perth. I also did home demonstrations, introducing the product to the people around me as I had done in Perth and I did get a new distributor started by doing their first number of parties. It certainly allowed me to meet a lot of people and as I was very excited about the quality of the product I could talk about it with enthusiasm. I understood that Frank would be paid a retainer and of course he could and would also work on building an organization for himself. Henk Buiter had already organized a rental house fully furnished for the three of us to move in to. The next thing that I needed to do was buy myself a car. Frank was supplied with a company car as he was to be in charge of sales and sales management. Henk Buiter took me to a car dealer where I selected a second hand red coloured SAAB 4 door sedan. It looked nice and drove very comfortable and I was happy with the selection.

The next evening we attended the first opportunity meeting, sitting at the back and watching the proceedings. In Perth we were used to seeing at least 50 people, often many more, at such an opportunity meeting, but here there were about 10 people sitting there and there was an English speaking man presenting the opportunity meeting which was being translated sentence by sentence by a Dutchman. It was obvious that this method of presentation was

not very impressive to the person sitting in the meeting room and at the end nobody stayed behind to discuss anything, meaning that this evening was just another wasted presentation. It was clear, the sooner Frank or I could present the opportunity meeting in Dutch, the better it would be. It was also obvious to me, being a business man with some experience, that with five people working as an overhead, the Company must be working at a loss and therefore in desperation, international management had got us here to get the business in Holland firing.

We both were ready to go and on the first training session on the following Saturday afternoon, Frank told the small group of distributors, a few of them being General Distributors, that from here on the opportunity meetings were going to be done in Dutch by either Frank or me. All they had to do was bring in as many guests as they could and then we would do the rest. We decided on two meetings per week for starters to see how things would develop. Frank had a bit of trouble expressing himself in Dutch in the beginning but I had no trouble at all and got excited as I could see this as a new challenge for me. The good thing was that the distributors were very happy with the changed speakers and were bringing more guests to the meetings and within a couple of weeks we were on our way with new distributors joining in and they were bringing in their friends and family members. Frank and I coming here had made a difference already and with the product knowledge that we both had, the product training session two weeks later got everybody firing. It did not take long for me to get my first General Distributor, and his organization started to grow and before long it started to snowball. It was the excitement that did it and everybody was happy.

During my weekly phone calls home to Riet I was able to convey that things were looking promising. As time went on I could see that before long I would be in a position to advise Riet that the time was near for her to make preparations for the move to Holland. I was amazed how quickly that I fully mastered the Dutch language and was able to speak it fluently although with an accent. The Dutchies did not mind the accent and I was accepted everywhere. I think that my strong belief in the opportunity and so importantly the quality of our product won the people over every time. It was in about April that Frank suggested that I should make a start of having opportunity meetings in Rotterdam and we found a meeting room just North of Rotterdam in Schiedam in a motel complex which was close to the “Zestienhoven Airport” It was easy to get to and very near the highway to Utrecht. The Company would be paying for the meeting room hire. To get me started Frank and a few other distributors from the Utrecht area came along with some guests and we were on our way. At this point of time I was given the title of Area Sales

Coordinator (A.S.C.). For the first month we did one meeting per week and I soon had some local people from the Rotterdam area joining as distributors and as I had seen before in Perth, the business started to grow. I was now attending the Utrecht meeting once a week and doing my own in Schiedam with the help of the new ones that I had recruited in the Rotterdam area.

Early May I phoned Riet and asked her to go ahead and make the arrangements for selling the house and plan the move to Holland for about the middle of June and I would look for accommodation for the family near Rotterdam somewhere. I told Riet to get in touch with Kevin Sullivan, the real Estate Agent through whom we had bought the house in Riverton in the first place as he would know the property well. In the meantime I contacted an Agent in Rotterdam inquiring about rentals North of Rotterdam and he told me that in about a month's time there would be one becoming available in Berkel-Roderijs. The location would be ideal as it was close to the motel where we were holding the meetings and after having made an inspection of the property I thought that it would suit our family. The only thing that was disappointing was the price. They were asking 1000 guilders per month, but as there was a housing shortage, I had no option but to take it and I secured it starting as from the 15th of June. The good thing was that there was a fair amount of furniture and bedding, fridge, stove, washing machine and a dryer as part of the deal. As soon as I had it secured and had paid the first month's rent in advance, I phoned Riet with the good news and asked her to make the arrangements for the flight any time after the 15th of June.

I soon got confirmation back from Riet that the house was sold and that it would be settled at the same time as she would be flying to Amsterdam and that was now planned for the 16th of June. It turned out to be a hectic time for Riet to do all this on her own as there was a lot of stuff like bedding and furniture that of course had to be left behind and that naturally did hurt a lot. But Riet, the strong woman that she is and was, did it all and then on the day of departure, Riet's Mum and Dad and her younger brother Ron, took the whole family with all the enormous amount of luggage and boxes to the airport.

Riet and her Mum had always been very close and as her Mum was not all that healthy after the stroke she had suffered ten years before, her Mum could not say a word and as Riet told me later on, that she was just standing there in her blue rain coat, watching her daughter and seven grand-kids leaving for the departure gates.

Riet said afterwards that she could see in her eyes that that was going to be the last time that she would see her alive. It must have been very hard for Riet and in a way I felt sorry for having been the cause for this heart ache for her.

I was anxiously waiting at the Schiphol Airport near Amsterdam, way before arrival time, and then when they came through the customs gate I could not believe my eyes. All the seven boys were dressed in new outfits and looked very impressive as a group. It was a very emotional moment for all of us and because of the tension that Riet must have been under over the last weeks leading up to this moment, she had completely lost her voice. How she had been able to control these seven boys under all this is still amazing. But that was the woman I fell in love with back in 1957.

When we waited at the carousel for all this big heap of luggage to appear, we were informed that all of our stuff had been left behind in London by mistake and would be available at the airport's luggage counter the next day. You see the flight from Australia was via London where they had to be transferred on a short flight to Schiphol. In hindsight it did not really matter as we could not carry any of it in the Saab anyway. Now the question was how to fit the whole family in this medium sized car. At the end this was how we did it. Riet was to sit on the front passenger seat with Paul and Dean on her lap. Terry in the back with Chris in between his legs and the other boys, Jeff, Kevin and Tim also on the back seat well squashed together. Then any hand luggage that did not fit in the boot, finished up on the boys laps on the back seat. I tell you we had a full house or I should really say a full car. I calculated that there would have been about ¾ of a ton in the car at that time and I was lucky that we were not stopped by the police between Schiphol and Berkel-Roderijs.

When we got there the neighbours were surprised to see the amount of people that came out of this car in front of the three storey house in the Wagner Straat. When I showed the inside of the house to Riet she was pleasantly surprised with the space and was looking forward to settling in after all the work she had been through with the preparation for the move to Holland. All what she was looking forward to right now, was a good nights sleep and I think that the boys felt about the same after the very tiring long flight.

The next morning I phoned Frank in Utrecht and asked him if it would be possible for the guy that did the deliveries from the store room, to meet me at Schiphol with his van in order to cart our luggage and boxes to Berkel-Roderijs as there was no way that my Saab could carry it all. Of course that was no problem and by the afternoon all of our stuff was with us in the house and Riet could get stuck into unpacking and getting the house in order.

The day before the family arrived I had done some shopping but of course it was just the bare essentials and the fridge and cupboards needed stocking up. There were two things that were important at this stage and that was school for the five older boys and the other thing was the Dutch language for the kids.

None of them could speak a word of it and they had to learn it fast. Kevin, Tim and Chris were enrolled at the local primary school and Terry and Jeff went to an intermediate school in Hillegersberg half way between Berkel-Roderijs and the North part of Rotterdam mainly to learn the Dutch language.

The following Sunday, Frank and Cathy Williams called in for coffee and to catch up with the family since they had seen them last back in February before our flight to Holland. It was good for Riet to be able to have a talk to Cathy now that we were settled in a bit. I agreed with Frank that I would continue to have the once a week meetings here in Schiedam and also once a week in Utrecht and I would also participate in the Saturday afternoon training in Utrecht. It was important to our family that we spend some time together to make up for the lost time while we were apart for four months. It was funny when the neighbours remarked about our kids kicking a football at the front of the house on their bare feet, something they were not used to seeing the Dutch kids doing.

The house itself was built as a group of houses joined together, about ten of them, each house about 6 metres wide with a single garage, entrance hall, staircase and a small room at the back on the ground floor level. The first floor contained a verandah at the back as well as on the front, a good size kitchen with plenty of cupboards, lounge area and a large dining area while the top floor housed four bedrooms and a bathroom with the laundry facilities in the bathroom.

I have never forgotten the next worrying event. On about the 12th of October Riet noticed that Dean did not seem to be all that happy. He showed little interest in eating and as he was not yet going to school, he was just laying around as if something was wrong with him. His temperature was high and it would not come down and he was vomiting a lot. It was just one day before his fifth birthday that the lady next door advised Riet to call the doctor as it did not look all that good with him. It was a Saturday but he came just the same and within five minutes he told Riet that he was going to call an ambulance immediately to take him to the hospital as he needed urgent attention, as he had his suspicions of what it might be. The hospital was in the northern part of Rotterdam and as I was in Utrecht at that very moment, Riet went with Dean in the ambulance. They first thought that he might have an ear infection so they pierced his ear drum and Dean screamed blue murder as it was very painful. One of the symptoms that they noticed was a stiff neck and that apparently points to meningitis, so the next morning they did a lumber puncture whereby they bend the body forward allowing the vertebrae of the backbone to open a little so that the doctor can insert a needle in the spinal chord to extract some fluid for testing for meningitis.

This test confirmed what the doctor thought what Dean's problem was and now they knew how to treat him. He stayed in the hospital for more than a week receiving treatment and he gradually got on top of the problem. We were glad that this doctor got him to hospital in a hurry because if he had not done so he could have suffered brain damage, deafness, blindness or he could have even died, so at the end we owed this doctor heaps and we were very thankful for his actions.

The kids started to pick up the Dutch language fairly quickly and to help them along we would only speak Dutch to them at home and at times that became hilarious. By now we were well into the winter and when the first snow fell, the kids experienced something new to them. The only time they had seen snow before was on the television and now it was in real life. It was also very cold and that took a bit of getting used to, but it was fun throwing snow balls at each other and making a snow man. It was hard keeping the car on the road when the roads were covered with snow and when that froze it got very slippery.

I remember driving in a snow storm from Rotterdam to Zierikzee in Zeeland, South West of Rotterdam, where I had a Direct Distributor who needed some help from me and I had to do a home demonstration for a group of his neighbours. You could hardly see the edge of the road so it was a slow drive for safety's sake as I could not afford to damage my car. I was not the only one taking it easy in these weather conditions but in the end I got there in one piece.

While the school year in Australia starts in February, in Holland the new school year starts in early September after the long summer holiday period so in September 1975, both Terry and Jeff were transferred to the Technical Trade School as they both had no inclination to study at high school level. They both had made it known that they were looking at carpentry as their chosen trade and before being able to start an apprenticeship, they had to be enrolled at a trades school. Tim was not doing so well at school as he did not seem to grasp what the teacher was telling him and after tests in Rotterdam it was revealed that he had a severe hearing defect and the end result was that he had to be measured up with two hearing aids and because of this he was transferred to a special school in Rotterdam where they specialize in kids with these problems.

I was made aware that if I wanted to make use of the rental housing made available by the Shire (Gemeente) of Berkel-Roderijs, I had to put my name down on the application list and then wait my turn for anything becoming available. I should have done this earlier but I did not know that this housing scheme was in order to take advantage of it. The average price per month

would be about 450 guilders and that was a lot better than what I was paying now on the private housing market of 1000 guilders per month. So we got on the waiting list and were hoping that it would happen soon as I could do with the saving of 550 guilders per month. You could buy a lot of food for that.

My organization of distributors was growing steadily with now about eight of my own General Distributors and we were close to going to the first General School in Madrid in Spain, paid for by Golden Products Holland. It was going to be an exciting event as Riet and I were going with all my new General Distributors and at the school there would be some international speakers addressing the new General Distributors and their wives or partners. They would also be presented with their General Distributor pins. As I had been to a few General Schools, my first one in Hawaii at the end of 1971 from Perth, I knew how exciting they could be for a newcomer. You would leave with a lot of desire to do well and they certainly knew how to get you firing and rearing to go when you got back home again. Every time I came back from a General School, I was pumped and could not wait to pass on the message of spreading the quality of the product and the opportunity to improve your financial situation. Also for myself and my family.

In February 1976, at about 7 o'clock in the morning, we got a phone call from Riet's brother Bert Clynk, informing us that Riet's mother was dying and if Riet wanted to come over she should do it now as it was only going to be days if even that. It was a hell of a shock to the system as those two had been very close all their lives. I said to Riet that she could go if she wanted to as there was some money available that she could use, but she said: "no", and these were the reasons for her to say no to my offer.

We knew that within a few months we could be getting the rental from the Gemeente of Berkel-Roderijs and then we needed to buy beddings, furniture, fridge and washing machine. If Riet was to go, it was very likely her Mum might have passed away before she arrived home and she was not looking forward to the sadness of a funeral after that. The third thing in her consideration of her decision was that during her time away, who was going to look after all the kids, as I was busy, driving around all day, doing my Golden Products business away from home?

In her mind her family at this time just had to come first and that was that. I could only admire her for taking this stance and that shows you what sort of a mother she was and still is and I loved her for that. She had a hard time over the following months as you well can understand.

In April we were allotted a four bedroom home in what was called the "sterrenwijk" (star district). It was a fairly new housing complex of various size homes joined together, with a back yard and even a shed that could house

push bikes etc. and was accessible from a parking lot at the back. Riet's decision not to use our saved up money for her to go to W.A. two months before, paid off finally in the end.

We were only in the house for a month when we received a letter from Riet's Dad that he was planning to come over in June to see us for a couple of weeks. In a way Riet was pleased about his coming and on the other hand she was pissed off a bit with him, because some years back, her Mum had won the lottery and Mum, as she always had been home sick for Holland had asked him if they could go to Holland together for a visit. He flatly refused, so she went all by herself which was very irresponsible of him for letting her go all on her own. When she came back from Holland at that time she was very sick and she had had a difficult time in Holland depending on family over there. I can still remember Riet's words when she opened his letter announcing his planned trip: "What a bastard, why didn't he go with Mum some years back when she had pleaded with him and he refused and now she was barely cold in the ground and now he wants to come to Holland to see us".

Anyway a few weeks later he came and we went to Schiphol to pick him up. During the day he spent some time with Riet and the boys and on the following Sunday we took him to have a look at the Delta works in Zeeland, where the Dutch Government had built a massive structure to protect the flood prone area, which had been flooded so badly during the storm and floods of February 1953. This Delta structure was very unique and had received world wide acclamation at that time when it was finished. As Riet's Dad and myself were familiar with construction works, it was very interesting to the both of us and we marveled at the massive construction that was carried out under difficult circumstances. It turned out to be a very educational Sunday for all of us.

As I was doing a lot of kilometres on the road I felt that it was time for me to trade my Saab in for a newer model, also a Saab, as it was a bit of a prestige car and it was also comfortable to drive in.

Another thing that we had to do every year was to present ourselves at the local police station, because we had Australian passports and therefore we were classed as foreigners.

We had to let them know about our movements and our passports were stamped accordingly every year. It was a bit of a nuisance but we just had to live with it. Riet's Dad stayed with us for about three weeks and during this time, we and Riet in particular, tried to please him but he had not changed much from what I remembered him to be, before we went to Holland. He was forever criticizing what I was doing and as I was away a lot at night doing meetings and product parties, he could not understand or did not want to



The distributors applauding us entering the meeting room.

understand that I had to earn a living for my family as I was the only bread winner.

It was obvious that he just did not like me much and that had not changed over the years since I started courting Riet back in 1957. Another thing did not help and that was that he was still smoking and he drank a lot of sherry and the combination of the two, made him cough a lot and at times he used to turn all purple in his face as if he was going to collapse. For the kids it was frightening at times and they could not understand him doing this to himself. Than the time came to take him back to Schiphol for his flight back to Australia and although for Riet it was nice for him to be here and to have

someone to talk to during the day and to talk about her Mum and her last days before she died, I think she was glad that he was leaving at the end.

The boys were well and truly settled into a routine of school and they were also making friends and at times getting into some mischief as boys sometimes do with the result that the local police paid Mum a visit trying to find out who did this or that. At one time Kevin found that the Mercedes star at the front of car bonnets was very interesting and he just could not resist removing them and keeping them as a trophy and Tim found that the window of a site office on a building job needed to be touched to see if it would give in under pressure and the local cops called in as our boys were the likely suspects.

It was through one of the boys friends by the name of Best that they were asked if they would be interested to deliver newspapers around the village either before or after school. Of course it was discussed with Mum and it would be a means of keeping them occupied during the day and at the same time they would be earning some pocket money as we were no believers of paying the kids pocket money every week. We would buy anything that they needed but that was as far as we went.

With five potential delivery boys in our family it soon became known who was doing the delivery and then one day the man from the news paper office called in to find out if Mum was interested in becoming the distributor for the Berkel-Roderijs area. It meant getting up early in the morning and counting the heaps of papers for about ten boys and having them ready for our and other kids to pick them up for delivery from our little garden shed in the back yard. This went on even if it was raining or with the snow and ice around. Even Chris, who was only ten at that time, was not going to miss out and as stubborn as he was, he kept it up through rain, hail or shine. It gave Mum also some nice pocket money which she liked for herself.

Dean and Paul always walked together to school and in Holland the kids would come home for their lunch. On one of these days, while walking home for lunch, Paul crossed the road without looking and got run over by a car and badly hurt his ankle and dented the bone.

The man in the car took both the boys home to Riet and then with Riet in the car to the doctor who directed them to the same hospital in Rotterdam where Dean had been before. During all this Paul cried a lot as it apparently looked all very painful with the skin pulled back exposing the bone that was all dented.

He stayed in hospital for a few weeks while they tried to heal the wound. For some reason it did not want to heal so they tried skin grafts which eventually worked. He still has the scars on his leg where they took the skin for the



That is me getting ready to deliver an announcement.

graft on his ankle which is still very visible on his ankle as well. As they say, never a dull moment, and Riet knew all about that.

My organization of General Distributors was steadily growing giving me plenty of work to guide them into successful Distributors and in doing so I finished having the largest organization in Holland. With that I was able to earn some good money but it also meant that I travelled everywhere from Eindhoven in the South, to Amsterdam and even as far as Groningin in the far North. It often meant that I would get home finally after midnight and dog tired after doing an opportunity meeting with talks afterwards with the Local Distributors. I had a really great man in my organization living in Lekker-Kerk, just East of Rotterdam, and his name was Piet de Vries who had a small business selling clothing from home. He was very happy with the quality of the products and he quickly built a large group of distributors around him, became very popular and did a lot of his own training in the Rotterdam area.

Another great fellow was a bloke called Jan van Woerkom and he lived in Bladel, South West of Eindhoven near the Belgium border. He was a painter but he had to give it up as he was in constant pain because of a liver complaint that he had inflicted to himself due to being an alcoholic. Because of this drinking problem he was hard to live with and his family had a hard time because of it.

His brother in law, who lived in Woerden, West of Utrecht, was in my organization and he saw this as an ideal opportunity to get him out of the



Here I am speaking at a Direct Distributors School.

doldrums. It was him that introduced Jan van Woerkom to me and so he became part of my organization. He needed something he could get his teeth into and from the very first time that I met him, I took a liking to him and he got stuck into his distributorship like I had never seen before. Perhaps to him it meant that he could be somebody after his drinking problem had dragged him down into the gutter.

His wife Corry and their two daughters were very supportive of him becoming a General Distributor and he was in Utrecht at every opportunity meeting with guests from the South and his distributorship started to grow very quickly. He never missed a training session on the Saturday and participated soon in the Sunday speaker training sessions as well. It did not take long before half of the meeting room was filled with people from the South and as a result of that, Jan's organization in the South grew so quickly that it was necessary to start doing meetings in Eindhoven.

I then started to realize that I needed to move more central near Utrecht as I was also traveling to Groningen to help a new General Distributor by the name of Yte Mosselaar, who lived in Groningen himself. Yte was not in my organization but I felt that he needed my support as he was struggling to get off the ground and he was a very likable fellow with a lot of promise. He was in the organization of Frank Williams but Frank had just been transferred to Taiwan to help in starting up Golden Products in that country.

We got another fellow to take Frank's place by the name of John Wallace, who could not speak a word of Dutch. When we had our Direct Distributors schools we sometimes had English speaking visitors attending to do part of the training. One of them was Graham Caldwell, who was an Australian, and he was the International Chairman of Golden Products and he travelled around the world to the many countries where Golden was operating.

I shall mention here in what countries they were at that time. They were in Spain, Italy, Denmark, England, Ireland, USA, Canada, Japan, South Africa, Taiwan, and of course Australia. Other International speakers included Peter Riggs who had the knack of really motivating you into making you believe that if you really wanted to become successful you could achieve that. Positive Mental Attitude is what he was able to hammer onto you and after that you left with a great feeling to go out and perform at the best of your ability and so did another one from America and his name was Rudy Della Monica. He spoke from the heart and in doing so, whatever he said, was very sincere and believable. Riet took a liking to him and so did I. Another International speaker was Jack Collins from Australia and because of that we took an instant liking to him as well.

As I mentioned before I needed to look into re-locating more to the centre of Holland so I looked at a place just South of Utrecht named Nieuwegein. I paid a visit to the office of the Gemeente (Shire) to put my name down for a rental and I was told that there was one becoming available in the Spinet Hof at number 27. After an inspection of the place I could see that it would suit us very well so I put my name down for it and then planned the move as soon as possible.

This was in the beginning of 1978. The house was double storey and bigger than the average one in the street. There was no under cover parking but you could park very close to the house on a common parking lot. Riet and the boys had to abandon their paper rounds in Berkel-Roderijs but that could not be helped. Terry and Jeff started to work for a local builder as apprentice carpenters and this proved to be the start of those two working together periodically over their working lives. The other boys continued their schooling at the local schools and Tim was re-located at a special school in the Southern part of Utrecht.

Soon after the business started to suffer a bit due to the negative influence of a television program that was run by Frits Bom (a journalist of a current affairs program). This program did nothing else but criticizes anything as a form of sensationalism and allowed people to tell sob stories without giving the other party the chance to give their version of the story resulting in facts often being distorted. In addition at every opportunity meeting the word



We are being congratulated by the International Leaders on our success in Holland at the Belgium General School.

WORK was always emphasized but some newcomers thought that it was going to be easy money however it certainly was not. You had to work at it and give it time to develop.

With the down turn of new people starting and therefore considerable less product turn over, the Company in Holland was not making any profit at all and as I already pointed out in the beginning of my observations about the, in my opinion, to high an overhead, when we arrived here in Holland, I could see that something was in the air to happen. Then one day Graham Caldwell was in the office and he called me and invited Riet and I to dinner that evening. After the meal he told me that they had decided to close down the Company in Holland as over the last five months they had had to pump money into the Dutch company to keep it afloat and they were not going to continue doing that. The lease for the office and warehouse building was up for renewal for another five years and as it really was far too big and with the staff they had it was just not a proposition any more. In all fairness to me and my family he felt that I needed to be informed in advance so that I could make arrangements to return back to Australia if I wanted to do so. At first it was a shock to the system as it was the last thing that I expected to be told and Riet was also unhappy with the news of what they were planning to do. I told him that I wanted to think about what he had told us and asked him where I could get hold of him in the next day or so. He said that he would phone me two days later.

We had some important decisions to make. Here we were with our seven boys, had come to Holland in the belief that there was a future for us here and all of a sudden there was to be an end to that. I had a big organization and a good income from it which would all be lost if we went back to Australia. We had an exciting product to sell that I believed in and an opportunity that was still there. The only thing that was wrong was the enormous overhead that was killing the Dutch Company. I thought, why can't I run my own Company myself the way I felt that it should be done and using the Golden Products as they were a very good product. Riet and the older boys were happy to support me in my effort of doing this and when Graham Caldwell phoned me back two days later I told him so. I discussed with him that although the marketing and the distributor structure should remain as it was before, I wanted to incorporate an unconditional buy back clause, for any Direct Distributor that had a change of mind, so that I would buy back the product for the same price as he had paid for it. I thought that may at least kill the unfair criticism from Frits Bom on the television. Graham Caldwell was happy for me to incorporate that but it was going to be on my neck if it failed.

The existing lease of the warehouse was going to run out in three weeks time and I told him that I was not going to take over the lease and if he was happy for me to start my own, he needed to come over and discuss and finalize the matter with me. The next day he came, as he was in England at that time, and we sorted it all out. From the end of the lease date, the Company would be known as G.P. DISTRIBUTING and it would operate from a different location for me to organize as soon as possible. Also one week later Graham chaired a meeting at the old address with all the General Distributors, to inform them officially of the change and of my position in the new Company and that the International Head office in USA would support me with any training on any future General and Direct Distributor schools. He also announced that I wanted to incorporate an unconditional buy back clause for every new Direct Distributor, who had a change of mind, and that I would buy back the products for the same price that had been paid for it. When it was announced all the General Distributors applauded me for bringing this in and it could only become a positive move towards the success of the new company.

However we had to prove to be self sufficient as Head Office would not provide any money in supporting us. Supply of new products would be from the manufacturing plant that was located in Belgium, but any existing stock that was still in the warehouse was available for me to take over. At that meeting it was clear that I had the full support of all the General Distributors and that gave me a tremendous boost to go ahead and do what I had to do for the

sake of everyone around. To Graham Caldwell it was clear that I would make a success of the change over.

Terry and Jeff as I had mentioned before were working together for the same builder who had his workshop in Nieuwegein and I had been at his place of business a few times. Just around the corner from there I noticed that there was a workshop of some sort with a brick building attached to it that seemed to be empty and I thought that maybe I could rent it. So I walked in and noticed that this was a cabinet makers shop and after talking to the owner

I found out that he was not intending to use it for about two years and then it would become an office and a showroom. It was available now so I rented it straight away, so that I could build a small office in the corner near the entrance door and then the rest, about one hundred square metres, would be an ideal meeting and training room. I took it on a monthly basis, with a month's notice, for quite a reasonable price and I was happy.

Not far from there, in one of the back streets, I noticed that there was what looked like a flour mill. It was a fairly large set up and I thought that may be there was some space available that I could use as a store room. I thought if you don't ask, you will never find out. And I did find out that on the first floor of one of their warehouses facing the road, there was plenty of space for me to use. Even better there was a hole in the upstairs floor of about 2 metres x 2 metres, big enough for a full pallet to be lifted through. Also there was a forklift stationary down stairs and I had permission to use it any time that I needed it free of charge.

It was ideal to me as it was close to the new office and meeting room. I agreed a price and took it straight away as it was the best solution that I could have wished for. All that I needed to buy was a hydraulic pallet trolley to move the pallets around upstairs and I was in business. Graham agreed that I had done very well in the short space of time. I asked him if I could have all the chairs that were in the old meeting room in Utrecht and he was happy for me to have them and I also noticed that in the store room in Utrecht there was a single axle trailer with a green canvas cover over a metal frame which would come in handy for carting larger quantities of product around as I was planning to take them with me when I went to the North, West or South to do the opportunity meetings. I was doing well as I got that one also for free.

The next thing that I needed, and that certainly did not come for nothing, was an upgrade on my car. As I did not have a tow bar on my Saab I felt that with the amount of driving that I was doing combined with the need to tow a trailer often, I wanted a Mercedes diesel which would be a lot more economical. So after shopping around Utrecht I found what I needed and made the swap and from here on I was ready to get firing as G.P. Distributing.

I started a local lady in the office on half days for starters to man the telephone, and to do any secretarial work and invoicing of orders that were coming in. Her name was Hanna and she fitted in very well in the new set up. From here on, Graham would contact me at a pre-arranged times to receive my report on any progress and to take new orders of pallets of product to be delivered to my makeshift store facility. From the start of the official opening at the new office in Nieuwegein where the program of meeting dates in Nieuwegein, Rotterdam, Eindhoven and Groningen were announced, things started to take off very quickly.

From here on Jan van Woerkom did the meetings in Eindhoven, Piet de Vries the same in Rotterdam and Yte Mosselaar did the meetings in Groningin and it worked out well with Eindhoven really taking off like a rocket. I kept doing the Nieuwegein meetings and then I would travel to the various centers to be the guest speaker on a regular basis. It meant that I was on the road most evenings with the trailer loaded with products and you know what? I was making a good profit and so were the General Distributors and there was excitement in the air. It was great, being able to report to Graham Caldwell on a regular basis, about the increase of distributors.

With the influx of new General Distributors, we were looking at having our first General Distributors School and it was going to be in Maastricht in the very Southern part of Limburg which is in the very South of Holland. It was going to be held in the third week of November 1978. With 19 New General Distributors this was going to be a new experience for me as it was up to me to organize the whole event on my own with the assistance of Graham Caldwell and Rudi Della Monica as guest speakers.

Of course someone had to do the translating into Dutch and that was to be done by myself however Riet also offered her services to do this and I must say that she proved to be very good at this and the New General Distributors with their wives appreciated her efforts. The School took place in one of the historical function centers in the heart of the city and the surroundings were just ideal for it. All the new General Distributors and their wives were presented with their General Distributor’s pin on which they could earn diamonds according to a maximum monthly production in their organization and that was also very stimulating.

With the start of the new Company I organized for a newsletter to be put together with a printing artist, whom I had already met when I was working in Rotterdam. I provided all the copy material and photos, for this two monthly newsletter with announcements of achievement awards and news of coming events and so on. This also gave the new Company some credibility in the eyes

of the outside world and the distributors liked it a lot. It was all very positive and we could well do with that.

In the meantime Terry and Jeff had settled in well with their new boss and they did everything from concrete footings, fixing steel reinforcement, pouring and vibrating concrete and any carpentry out on the job or in the workshop. Working there they did any wood machining and making joinery which they had learned to do when they were at the tradetech school in Hillegersberg near Rotterdam. They joined in with the rest of the workforce and were well accepted and liked although they both played some practical jokes on their workmates at times and in particular Jeff was a good one at doing this.

The others were all doing well at school and by now had mastered the Dutch language quite well and became well accepted by the other school kids. As I was often on the road during the day to talk to a new distributor or helping one out with a product party, I could often not be contacted for a while and on one of those days Riet called for the local doctor to have a look at Dean. She was not happy with him as he had a fever and was not interested in food at all. The doctor said that it may be appendicitis and advised Riet to take him straight away to the Ijselstein Hospital. As Riet could not reach me at that moment, she put Dean on the back of her pushbike and carted him across the Highway to the hospital where he was indeed confirmed to have appendicitis and was in need of an urgent operation before it would burst. So that was done on the same day and when I got home I was told all about it and felt sorry for both of them for having to go to the hospital by pushbike while I was away in the car driving around the countryside.

I tell you that pushbike did get a hammering because Riet did all the weekly shopping on that bike with bags full of groceries hanging on the handle bars and a cardboard box at the back of the bike. It takes a lot of groceries to feed a family of nine and it all was carried home on her bike. Dean came out of the operation all right and from there on never looked back.

There was a buzz of activity at the various opportunity meetings around the country with the results that we had been hoping for. With the increase of new General Distributors we needed to plan for the next General Distributor School and after consultation with Graham Caldwell, we decided to go to Brugge in Belgium. So on the second Saturday of March 1979, Riet and I drove to Brugge via Breda, Antwerp and Gent to make the arrangements for a function that would last for four days. We left at 9 o’clock in the morning and after enjoying a morning coffee in Antwerp we got to Brugge by lunch time. We looked around a bit and were at the hotel at the arranged time of 2 pm to meet up with the hotel manager who showed us around the function center

and the accommodation. It looked all very impressive and classy and that was just what I wanted for this General School.

We spent some time discussing what I was after and went through the assortment of menus that were on offer. By the end of the afternoon we had it all sorted out and priced and agreed upon. A date was set for the event and it was going to be on the first Saturday of June, finishing on the following Wednesday. It promised to be a great event and I was already looking forward to it. At the conclusion of our discussions with the manager, he invited the two of us to stay on for dinner and that was on the house. As we were very happy with the outcome of our discussions we accepted this gesture with pleasure and enjoyed a lovely dinner before driving back to Nieuwegein.

We were both feeling very happy as we drove along to the point that we were even singing to the music on the radio. Just after I crossed the border from Belgium into Holland, we heard a terrible noise at the back of my Mercedes, and upon checking it out I realized that I had blown a hole in the muffler and with a diesel motor that makes a lot of noise but there was nothing that I could do about it on a Saturday evening. We were about 10 km from home when we were pulled over by a policeman wanting to know about the noise. He appreciated the fact that I needed to get home, and that we were nearly there, so he advised me to get it attended to as soon as possible. It did not dampen our happy mood and when we got home, waking up the neighbourhood, we soon got to bed for a well earned sleep.

Although it was already March, it was still very cold with the ice frozen on the windows. The next morning we would have normally gone to church, but that morning the bed felt too warm to abandon it and we stayed nicely huddled together for a while.

Six weeks later Riet found out that we should have gone to church that particular Sunday morning after the trip to Brugge, as she was sure that she was pregnant. A pregnancy test kit from the chemist proved that she was and Riet was devastated. I took the morning off and we went into Utrecht to try to relax and let this unexpected knowledge settle in. By lunch time we were getting used to the fact that we now needed to visit a doctor for confirmation and we organized a meeting the following day in Ijselstein at the hospital. He confirmed what we already knew for certain, yes, Riet was expecting a baby.

The doctor talked to us about the dangers of having a child at the age of 43 with the possibilities of a Down Syndrome or a deformed baby and advised us to at least have some internal test done, meaning sticking a needle through the abdomen into the amniotic sac to take some fluid for testing purposes. Immediately the question came up: “What if the test results were positive for Down Syndrome, what would we do”? And we both decided, that no matter

what the outcome would be, we would never go for an abortion but take what was meant for us. Therefore, as there was always a risk of any damage caused by taking the fluid from the womb, we were going to do nothing but allow the baby to develop as all the other seven had done before over the years.

The next thing was to tell the boys what was going to happen in the near future and we did get some different reactions from the older boys but in general they were happy for us.

There had been a growing bond between Corry van Woerkom and Riet and Corry was very supportive of Riet's situation. You see Corry did have a hell of a time with her husband who, because of his illness resulting from his drinking, was very hard to live with. Now because of his introduction into Golden Products and there after G.P.Distributing, he enjoyed a new lease of life and in his own area around Eindhoven he now was somebody while before he was a failure through his drinking. You can understand that because I gave Jan the opportunity to better himself, his wife was very grateful for the change in the attitude of her husband.

A week later I noticed in the local newspaper an advertisement for a 12 meter cabin cruiser being offered for hire just outside of Utrecht. As we had enjoyed our cruising days very much from the South Perth Yacht Club, I thought that we had earned a holiday for a week during the August holidays so I made the enquiries and subsequently hired this cabin cruiser for an eight day period in early August. Riet was already looking forward to this break and it was helping to take her mind off the unexpected surprise that had befallen her, as we would be covering the rivers around the center of Holland. The boys were looking forward to it as well as it brought back memories of our past trips to Rottnest and Garden Island.

It did not take long for June to come around and we were on our way to Brugge with 17 new General Distributors and some of the old ones. I had organized a large coach for the event as I thought that would create an exciting atmosphere to travel as a group and it would assure that nobody could get lost if they were to travel independently in their own cars. I thought it a good move to invite Hanna, the lady that I started in the new office in Nieuwegein for half days and who after one month worked there full time, to come along to the General School.

She would learn first hand what such a General School meant and did to the Distributors and at the same time she would assist me in the paperwork and organizing matters as there was a lot of work in the smooth running of this event. Graham Caldwell, Jack Collins and Rudi Della Monica were there as well and jointly we made this school a great success with Riet doing most of the translating. Graham was very pleased with the progress that I had been

able to make and he made it known that I had made the right decision in incorporating the buy back clause at the start of G.P.Distributing.

With that in place there was a lot less negativity around and we could concentrate on spreading the word of the great opportunity that was available for those that were not afraid to work and demonstrate the quality of these products that were kid safe and would not pollute our environment.

Early July we had a visitor from Australia. It was Riet's father who had written that he would be coming over to see us and spend a fortnight with us. So it meant a trip to Schiphol to pick him up and Riet got him settled into his own bedroom in the Spinet Hof house where we were still living at that time. In her correspondence with her father she never mentioned the fact that she was pregnant, so when we got home from the airport and Riet told him that she was going to have another baby, he blew his top and told me off for allowing this to happen. Riet quickly interrupted him by saying that it took two to tango and that we were very happy with what was going to happen with this family. Riet further pointed out to him that after her brother Bob was born, their doctor had warned them that there was to be no more babies for her, yet look what happened shortly after that. Riet's Mum was pregnant again and it turned out that was to be her brother Ron. "So don't point the finger at us"!

Anyway after all that he had no option than to accept the fact and learn to live with it. He had not changed his bad habits of smoking and drinking and often he would turn all blue and purple because of the coughing and the kids often remarked about it. What did hurt Riet most was that when we took him back to the airport two weeks later, he just walked through the departure gates without a handshake to me or a kiss and hug for Riet and that was very disappointing.

By this time both Terry and Jeff had gotten their drivers licenses and they both bought themselves a motor bike. I was amazed how Jeff in particular could handle his bike as he looked a lot smaller than Terry. They enjoyed themselves driving around the countryside and seemed well adjusted to this form of transport going to work. The Cabin cruiser was moored in Breukelen on the Amsterdam Rijnkanaal just North West of Utrecht and that was where we boarded the boat with the whole family in early August. It was lovely weather and we were all in a happy holiday mood. Riet was showing her bulge and was comfortable with it and happy to be away from the daily routine of house keeping.

For the next eight days that would be "boat keeping" and enjoying the scenery as we floated on the Dutch waterways. From there we followed the Lek through to Arnhem and then we took the IJssel to Zutphen and Deventer and then further to Zwolle and IJsselmuiden, where we entered the IJselmeer

area where the dredged polders are located and that alone was an interesting sight to see.

We stopped at various locations overnight and often we left the boat and looked around, making the holiday break, a very pleasant one. From IJsselmuiden we travelled through the waters of the Veluwemeer to Harderwijk where we temporarily left the boat and hired pushbikes in order to ride around and have a look at some interesting places in the area, and then it happened! As Riet was riding on her bike she went over a speed hump, and the pedal caught the top of the hump. Riet keeled over hitting her stomach on the handlebars and she landed on the ground. Immediate panic set in because of the baby and Riet was worried sick that she might have done some damage. She already had had some movement and thankfully that did not stop because of the fall, so she felt that she would just hang on over the last few days of our boat trip and then, after arriving home, she would go and see her doctor for a check up. In the privacy of the boat that evening I checked for any bruising and she did have a hell of a bruise on her stomach so we all were very anxious for the outcome in few days time.

The next morning we moved along the South end of the polder and finished up in Amsterdam for the last night and then the following morning we entered the Amsterdam Rijnkanaal to follow it back to Breukelen to handover the cabin cruiser. It was a relaxing trip and apart from the little hiccup in Harderwijk we wouldn't forget it easily. A visit to her doctor in Ijselstein confirmed that no damage was done to the baby and that was a load off our minds.

What was revealed at the check up with the doctor was that Riet's blood pressure was higher than normal and that was worrying a bit so she was provided with medication to control that. By early September the doctor put her on a completely salt free diet along with the instruction of very little, if any, house work at all as her blood pressure had continued to increase. Can you imagine, with the size of our family, Riet not doing any house work? The doctor soon woke up to that and ordered her into hospital the following week as he was getting very worried about her. From here on the work chores at home were divided between the older boys and myself with a couple of us visiting Riet in the hospital on a daily basis. Also some of the "close to us" General Distributors called in at the hospital giving Riet some moral support that she badly needed at times like these.

One very regular visitor was Corry van Woerkom and she was very welcomed by Riet. We soon settled into a routine doing the cooking at night before I paid Riet a visit in the hospital and then proceeded to do a meeting somewhere around the country. It was a hectic time because when I got back

late at night I used to do the washing of clothes and hanging them in the stair-well for drying before going to bed myself. It was a busy time but we coped.

The doctor in the hospital expressed his concern that her blood pressure could remain far too high to the point that it became dangerous and then on a Sunday evening we were all called in to see Mum for a short while as it seemed that something had to happen in a hurry. On the Monday I was informed that on the next day they were planning a caesarian section because they were afraid that Riet, now at eight months pregnant, was too weak to have a normal birth and that she would not last the next four weeks in her condition as her blood pressure was now dangerously high.

As a matter of fact it became touch and go. We were close to losing both of them. So the doctor was not allowing her to go any further and organized for the caesarian for the following day, at 2 pm, and I was not allowed in the theater room for the procedure. I waited just outside the room and then the door swung open and a doctor walked out pushing a humidity crib on wheels with a baby inside of it. He knew that I was the father and he motioned me to go with him to the end of the passage where the intensive care unit was for premature babies.

As we walked along the passage he informed me that it was a boy. Once inside the room I was allowed to put my hands through the two openings of the crib and touch my son and it was such a good feeling knowing that he had made it and the doctor then also informed me that Riet was out of danger and would be OK from here on.

I can tell you that that was a hell of a relief after all the tension we had been through over the last couple of months. I could not get back quick enough into the operating room to see my darling Riet and to tell her that I had placed my hands on our eights son and to tell her that he looked pretty good to me. As we did not know before hand what the baby's gender was, I was able to tell Riet that we again had another boy and then she told me that he would be Trevor Daniel, born on the 19th of November 1979. I spent a bit of time with Riet in the recovery room and while I was with her, the nurse checked her blood pressure and it was just amazing that after the birth, the blood pressure came back to nearly normal, which was very welcome news.

As it was obvious that Riet needed some time to rest after her ordeal, I stopped the boys from seeing her that night and promised them that the next night was a better time for a full family visit and introduction to their youngest brother Trevor. I was amazed how well Riet looked on the following evening but the doctor did let me know that she had to stay in hospital for another ten days at least. He knew that there was a large family at home, who would lay claim on her, for all the house-hold chores plus looking after a baby

at the same time and the doctor was right in his assessment of the situation. She received a lot of Get Well cards from many of the Distributors and a large bouquet of flowers from Graham Caldwell with his best wishes which was nice of him.

A couple of evenings later something nasty happened. Before Riet went into hospital she had organized the meat in the freezer with all the steaks on the one shelf and all the stewing/cooking meat on another shelf. Somehow one evening the cooking meat was taken out for a steak meal and of course it was as tough as hell. As there was not a great deal of time for eating before a visit to Mum in hospital, I tried to swallow the meat as I could not chew it properly and it got stuck in my oesophagus, which is the canal from the mouth to the stomach. Half way there is some sort of a valve that prevents the stomach acid coming up and that was where the piece of meat got stuck. I tried to wash it down with water but it just did not move and as I was trying to force it down I must have busted something there and I started to bleed. Blood was coming up in my mouth and so I phoned the local doctor explaining what was happening and he told me to save time by going straight to the hospital in the South of Utrecht and he would phone them to let them know that I was on the way.

I asked Terry to go and see Mum in my place and just tell Mum that I could not make it tonight. Driving my car on the way to the hospital I had to stop a few times to open my car door in order to empty my mouth from blood before driving on. When I got to the hospital they were waiting for me with a dish to spew into and then they took me up to the first floor where they had a scanner connected to a monitor already waiting. I then had to drink a cup full of some sort of thick substance that was supposed to make me vomit. I could see the lump of meat on the screen sitting there in my chest and with the vomiting action it eventually came out and all the muck with it all over the monitor.

It was a hell of a relief and after a clean up the doctor said that he wanted me to come back for a further examination of the affected area in my chest. We worked out a time between Christmas and New Year and made the arrangements accordingly for me to present myself at the hospital for the day after Boxing Day.

Before I left them I asked if they could phone the hospital in IJsselstein to tell my wife at the maternity ward that I was OK and that I would see her the following morning. I was anxious to get home after all this and it was too late to go and see Riet at the hospital. The first thing that I wanted to find out from Terry was how Mum was after me not turning up to see her. Terry was trying to not tell her about the episode of the meat stuck in my chest and the

consequent blood loss through my mouth, but he was not a good liar and Mum soon realized that something was wrong and in the end he told her. I found out later that she already had visions of being left alone with eight kids to look after.

When I saw her the next morning, I was able to reassure her that she had nothing to worry about and that they were going to check it out after Christmas. Her blood pressure remained normal and a week later I was allowed to pick her up from the hospital together with Trevor who only stayed in the humidity crib for a few days. Thank God we were back to normal after all those months of Riet going into the hospital.

With Christmas over now, I presented myself at the hospital after Boxing Day for the internal examination of the oesophagus. They took a sample of the affected area and had it tested and one week later I was informed that it was NOT cancer but just a permanent infection and all I had to do was not aggravate the area by chewing the food well and cutting the meat into small pieces before swallowing it. I never realized that they thought that it could have been cancer and now I was relieved that there was no problem in that direction.

I wanted to make some plans for the future as I had been thinking of getting my own business premises instead of renting. I had my eye on a new industrial area in Nieuwegein where I saw a For Sale sign on a new building. It was a large 6 meter high building which could be used as a warehouse. I would have to build a double storey office and meeting area in the front section of the warehouse and it would really work out well. Naturally we would do the internal building work ourselves with the three oldest boys. I approached Graham Caldwell for his approval and he said that it was up to me to decide about this change as I would have to finance it myself. The business was doing well with increased turnover and good attendances at the meetings so I thought that it was right for this next step in the business and I made the arrangements for the purchase of the new warehouse building. Six weeks later Graham came over for the official opening of the new head quarters of G.P.Distributing and all the Distributors were excited as this heralded a confirmation of what we were about. We were keen to prove to everybody that we were serious at proving at large that we were a genuine business with good opportunities for those that were prepared to work at it. Three months later I saw a three storey house that was on the market in Landouwer Drift also in Nieuwegein and after an inspection it was clear that with our family we would be very happy in it and it suited us well with a garage on the ground floor and a double covered carport within the building. As Terry had just bought a car for himself, this would come in handy as well. The price was very reasonable at 195,000 guilders of

which I put down 95,000 guilders and borrowed the rest. We moved in soon thereafter and settled in and all the kids liked it as well.

When Kevin finished his schooling he expressed a desire to become a sign writer but in Holland there was not such a trade and after talking to his trade teacher, he was advised to start an apprenticeship as a painter and then when he became a fully qualified painter, divert into sign writing. He agreed to do this and started with a local painter and for the next two months he did nothing else than strip wall paper off the walls in various houses in Nieuwegein. He soon got sick of that and decided that he was going to follow the footsteps of his two older brothers and become a carpenter.

He got himself a job in a joiner shop on trial and soon thereafter signed up as an apprentice. Tim had settled in well at his special school because of his hearing problem and started showing an interest in cooking and was being prepared at school to follow an education in that direction. Baby Trevor was doing great and we were organizing for him to be baptized in the Catholic Church. The local parish priest came out to discuss the matter with us and then, when asked what his names would be, he objected to our choice of Trevor Daniel. He said we had to name him after a Saint and but there was no Saint Trevor around at all. Mum put him right quickly by saying that all his brothers had English names and although he was born here in Holland, we would have the choice for him to be an Australian because of his Australian parents and that was it, take it or leave it.

The baptism ceremony was quite nice with all the other kids carrying a lighted candle and some of our closest friends as witnesses in the church. When the August school holidays came around, we went away in two cars to the South of Limburg for a whole week and did all the things that tourists would do when in the area and we enjoyed the break away from home and the daily routine.

The next thing on the agenda was the General Distributor School at the end of September and it was going to be held in Palma on the Spanish island of Majorca. It was going to be quite an event with a lot of Italian and Spanish General Distributors joining in. It would give it an International flavor and at the same time show our people how big this organization was as we were going to get some leaders from various countries participating in the training such as South Africa, Spain and Italy. We in Holland were really getting excited about the prospect of it all and there were about 30 General Distributors and their wives booked for this event. I was also asked to take part in the training program and it was a thrill for me to have gotten this far in the Golden world that had started for me back in 1971 at the opportunity meeting in Hay Street Perth as a guest invited by Adrian Doesburg.

Looking back I had come a long way and I had developed well as a speaker, bringing across the message of positive mental attitude in whatever you tackle in life. If you think that you can do it and believe in yourself, it is amazing what you can achieve. This General School in Majorca turned out to be a great success and they all brought back a lot of enthusiasm and renewed energy to draw from in continuing their own business back home.

Shortly after coming back from Majorca, Riet wanted to pay a visit to W.A. and catch up with her family and I suppose introduce our young son to them. Riet had been staying in touch with her brother Bert over the years and she would be staying with him and Marcia. So after New Year, early January 1981 Riet and Trevor flew to Perth and stayed there for three weeks. She enjoyed catching up with them all and was having a good time which was what she deserved after the hard time she had had having Trevor.

What we did not bank on was the power and manipulation of this bloody Frits Bom on the television and his drive to rail road the success of our business here in Holland. He had left us alone for more than a year on the TV, but all of a sudden he was at it again, criticizing and condemning our products and our marketing system. It was disheartening to see that in general the public accepted these statements on TV without giving us the opportunity to tell our side of the story. It was just a smear campaign that started to look like a personal vendetta designed to destroy the success of the individual Distributors in their quest to improve themselves through hard work.

By August 1981 it started to become an uphill battle with Distributors getting fed up with all that negative criticism and many at the end just giving up on all what they had learned at the positive training sessions. What was so hard to understand was why this Frits Bom just kept on repeating this bullshit on the TV almost if he was paid to keep on doing it. In the end we started to realize that it was becoming a campaign against free enterprise and that was typically a socialistic point of view.

By the beginning of 1982 Terry and Jeff were getting fed up with all this shit and made it known to us that they were both thinking of going back to West Australia and that they would ask family members there to take them in. Now this is what Riet strongly objected to as splitting up our family was the last thing that she wanted to happen. We ended up having a good down to earth family meeting and the outcome was that I would work towards all of us going back together as soon as possible.

I could see that in the end I was not going to be rewarded for my efforts with G.P. and that was not part of my make up. Graham Caldwell was also concerned because he kept on looking at the figures and they told him that the turnover was down quite a bit and that meant less money flowing through to

International. When he paid us a visit in March, we had a long conversation and I laid my cards open on the table. I pointed out to him that my family came first above anything else and that my mind was made up for us to move back to Australia.

On the other hand I did not want to leave the Distributors here in Holland in the lurch, so arrangements were made with Graham Foster who was running the English Company, which was located in Leeds that they would supply directly to the General Distributors here in Holland, from the time that we would leave for Australia.

All these arrangements were kept a secret at this stage as I had to start making plans to sell the warehouse building as it was my own money that was invested into that and I wanted to take that money back with me to W.A. Because of all this negativity, we had stopped doing any opportunity meetings and product training so the meeting room was not being used at this stage.

During this interim period I was able to rent out the ground floor room on a monthly basis to a Belgium music firm that wanted to use it as a show room for their various musical instruments like accordions, electronic organs, guitars etc. They were also interested in buying my photocopying machine and I was interested in one of their electronic organs, so in the end we made a swap and I got myself a nice organ out of it.

At the same time I started to advertise the warehouse and our house in the local newspaper while at the same time I was still servicing my own distributors and clients, creating some sort of an income to live on. And then towards the end of August I met, through the advert in the paper, with a local builder that showed an interest in the warehouse and after some negotiating came to a firm offer which meant that at least I got the money back that I had paid for it in the first place. Settlement was contracted to take place in early October so now I could start to make some plans in organizing our return back to W.A.

If I now could sell the house at the same time then that would be perfect so I kept on advertising weekly in the paper. I stayed in constant touch with Graham Caldwell and through him I was able to organize to deliver and sell any leftover product to the English Company shortly before our departure to West Australia. I also bought a 6 meter second hand steel sea container and had it delivered in front of our house on the first of October and organized for them to pick it up on the day that we were going to fly out to W.A. The container was contracted to be delivered to Antwerp in Belgium for shipment to Fremantle with the paperwork mailed to Bert Clynk’s address in Myaree where he was still living at that time. If only the house would sell in time before our departure date!

One week before we were planned to leave, I hired a 5 ton enclosed truck, loaded it up with all the product and also the office furniture that Graham Foster, from the English Company, was keen to buy from me, and then Riet came with me for the trip across the North Sea on the ferry from the Hook of Holland to Hull on the East Coast of England in order to deliver all the goods to him in Leads. It was an interesting trip but we were glad to get back again as this was like finalizing our plans for our return back home to W.A.

Both Terry and myself sold our cars at this stage as it would be too expensive to bring them along with us to W.A. Nothing was happening on the sale of our house and somewhere I had to make a decision. The market over the last year showed that the values had gone down a lot. In fact a house similar to our house, was on the market in the next street for about 100,000 guilders while about two years ago I paid 190,000 guilders for it.

This meant that if I was able to sell it now for market value, I would get nothing back for it myself as I would have to pay back the money that I had borrowed when I bought it. The easiest way now was just to walk away from it as I was not going to get any money back myself. So that is what I decided and after loading all our belongings in the container including both Terry and Jeff ’s motorbikes, we said goodbye to our good neighbours and went on our way to the airport.

CHAPTER 15

BACK TO WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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The flight was very tiring and Trevor was sick as he had an ear infection which did not help. Then there was a wait and stop over of five hours in Singapore and when we finally arrived in Perth it was midnight and we were all dog tired. Riet's brother Bert was waiting for us at the airport and after getting our luggage through customs and with the extra transport that Bert had provided, we were soon on our way to their home in Evershed Street in Myaree. Since last seeing this home, knowing that I had built it and then sold it to him, he had added a large games room with two small bedrooms at the back of it and that came in very handy now for all of us to sleep in. They both made all of us very welcome and invited us to stay with them as long as we needed to organize ourselves a rental home.

In our planning, already done in Holland during the last months there, I had worked out that I was looking to buy a block of land and build a home somewhere in Thornlie, so I needed to rent somewhere close to there. But the first thing that I needed to do was to go to a bank and deposit all the cash that I had brought with me from Holland. With the car that I borrowed from Bert, I drove to Thornlie and noticed that the only bank there was Westpac in Spencer Road so I called in and asked to speak to the accountant. I was told that he was not available at this moment and I was directed to speak to an assistant.

I told her that I had just come back from Holland with my family and would be settling down here in Thornlie. I further told her that I wanted to deposit all my cash, which was in Dutch Guilders, into an account that would earn me the best interest and that I could draw from as I was buying land and building my house. She advised me a particular interest bearing account and I put all my cash into it and she supplied me with a cheque book so that I could make payments with it. All this was done in the first week of October 1982.

The next thing was, that we needed some wheels to drive around in and Terry also felt the same way so the both of us went to Melville Motors along the Canning Highway in Melville and said that we both were in the market to buy for cash and as a result we both got a good deal on the spot. Then next I called in at the Real Estate Agent in Thornlie and was offered a three bedroom home to rent on the corner of High Road and Cowper Street in Lynwood and also shown some blocks to look at in Thornlie. There was a block in Crusader Drive at the very end of it and what I liked about it was that it was sloping up a bit from the street. The street number was 15 and after showing Riet the rental in Lynwood and the block of land, we decided that that was where we wanted to build and live. The price for the block was $15,000 which was very affordable so we signed up for that and paid for the deposit on the spot with a settlement in three weeks time.

With a plan of the block we went back to Bert's place and as I had already worked out some designs before of what I was planning to build, all what I needed to do was adjust the design to suit the block that we had bought. Bert had a friend who would prepare the plans and basic specifications ready for presentation to the City of Gosnells for approval. When one week later I presented the plans to the Council for assessment, I met the building surveyor who recognized me from the past as a builder and promised to push it through quickly and allowed me to start before-hand and do the setting out and all the preparation for pouring the concrete as long I waited to pour concrete until I had my building approval. And that is what I did. Before the month was out, I had the concrete slab down ready for the brick work.

In and around Perth there was enough work for the boys to get started. Terry found work near Spearwood in a boat building firm and Jeff started hanging fire doors in the city with one of the larger builders. Kevin still had his dream of being a sign writer and got, at his age of 19 years, an apprenticeship starting with a sign writer by the name of Nuggit Hiltz who had his business in Newcastle Street, Leederville so he was happy. Tim got a job at the White House Function Center on Nicholson Road near the Canning River and as Chris was still home, he spent his time with me on the block in Thornlie helping me with the building of the house. Shortly after the house was finished and we moved in, he was able to secure an apprenticeship as a cabinet maker with Victoria Cabinets in Welshpool. Another thing that I did in the first week was to buy Riet a good second hand car, a Datsun, so she could get around for her shopping and catch up with her family. Riet was more than happy to be back in Western Australia as she really was not that happy in Holland. Paul and Dean were enrolled at the Lynwood High School and they both had to learn

the English language as they had lost that during their spell in Holland. So that was all they did until Christmas getting all day lessons in English.

With the assistance of my brother Theo, who had his own business in Karragullen as a cabinet maker, I made all the timber door frames on the back verandah in Cowper Street, waiting for the concrete slab to cure. The Cardup Brick Company past Byford still remembered me from the past and I was able to get a discount on the bricks seeing that it was for my own house. Dowell Industries, the suppliers of aluminium windows and sliding doors, with whom I had done business for many years, also came to the party with a discount on their products and I was able to get a team of brick-layers to do the face brickwork on the outside and the garage/workshop at the back. I did the internal brickwork with the boys whenever they were available to help me. As I was keen to construct a strong roof over the house, I decided to manufacture a number of parallel steel trusses out of 40 mm angle iron to span the large open planned areas of the lounge and dining room and they would also provide support for tomming the roof on it. As I was working full time on the house during the day, I spent some evenings on the back verandah of the rental in Cowper Street making these steel trusses.

One evening Bert Clynk called in with a message that our steel container from Holland had arrived so I had to make arrangements for Customs to inspect it and then take delivery of the container. When Customs cleared it, all I had to do was organize a flat tabletop truck and a crane to lift the container off at the front of the rental house in Cowper Street and at last we were able to get to all of our belongings and make living a bit easier for Riet. I figured if I called a number of the larger builders, one of them might take the container off my hands as it would be an ideal lock up shed on a building site, and after a few calls I was able to sell it to John Holland Constructions for the same price that I had paid for it back in Holland. So it meant that I had the use of the container at no cost to me at all.

I had been a long time customer with the R & I Bank in Applecross until we went to Holland and towards the end of November I found out that the R & I had changed to BankWest and they had a branch in Maddington, very close to where I was now building our house. So I called in there and made myself known to them and expressed my desire to open an account with them similar to the one that I had opened with Westpac. All was arranged and I went back to the Thornlie branch of Westpac to draw out all my money plus the interest that I had earned over the nearly two months that my money was there. And then the shit hit the fan, because the girl behind the counter told me that there was no interest going to be added to the amount that I had in my account, because the interest in October would be calculated on the lowest balance

of that month. As I deposited the money in this account on the 4th day of October, the lowest balance for that month was zero. As I was going to take all the money out on the 28th November, the lowest balance for November was also zero, so there was no interest payable.

They had more than one hundred thousand dollars for nearly two months and they were not going to pay me anything for the use of it! Back in early October the girl had never explained to me about the lowest level of any month as the basis to calculate the interest on. I demanded to speak with the Manager but was told that he was not in the bank at present. Then I asked to speak to the Accountant and I was told that he was busy at the moment and that my best bet would be to write to the Head Office in Sydney. It was just a fob off and I can tell you I was pissed off with them!

When leaving with my money, I promised them that I would tell everybody about my disappointing experience with this bank and I would never do any business with them again. From there I went straight to BankWest in Maddington to deposit all my money and when I told them about what I had just been through at Westpac, they were astonished at their attitude.

The house was progressing well and I started to look in the newspaper for any adverts for either a building manager or a sales manager as I wanted to pick up a job as soon as we had moved into the house. I went through five interviews and I soon realized that at the age of nearly 51, I was too old and that they were looking for someone with a lot of experience but not older than 25.

Then mid February I saw an advertisement for Roy Weston Real Estate, advertising for salesmen. I telephoned a number in Midland, their Head Office at that time, and I was told to phone the Gosnells office and ask for a Mr. George Schaefer. I went over to see him the same afternoon and had a good talk to him. As it turned out he knew of my name as he had been a small time builder himself and he was quite interested to take me on as a salesman. He explained to me that before he could do that I had to get a Real Estate Sales Persons License. In order to get that I had to follow a five day course and the next one available was at the Carrine College in Carrine in the first week of March.

At the end of our discussion George asked me what I really wanted and then I said to him that I wanted his seat and I explained to him that I meant really my own office but I realized that I had to start off as a salesman. I told him that I strongly believed in the saying that: “You lead by example and then after that you must be judged by results”. And I said that I would show him what I could do. After I left him I made arrangements with Carrine College to

enroll for the course and went home to tell Riet what had taken place in the Roy Weston office in Gosnells.

The following weekend we shifted from the rental to our own home and were able to buy some bedding and other furniture in order to make our new home more comfortable to live in and we were all happy with the decision to have a swimming pool installed behind the house while the house was being built so we could cool off during the hot days.

After the five day course I was supplied with my sales person's certificate and I presented myself at the Gosnells office of Roy Weston along Albany Highway the next Monday morning at 8 o'clock where I was introduced to all the other sales people, about ten in total. I was supplied with a Roy Weston sales folder which contained, amongst all the sales aids, also the most important documents such as the listing forms and the offer and acceptance forms. It was clear to me that if you wanted to make money you had to get listings and you had to make sales.

In those days, unlike it is now, there was not a retainer being paid so you earned as you performed, which I thought was a good incentive. I was also supplied with four Home Open signs as it was made clear that home opens were a good way to get sales and to meet potential customers. From the people that I would meet I would get new listings and the more listings that I could get the more sales on which I would earn the full commission if I was to sell them myself. Selling real estate is a "talking to people" business. They also had a system that any walk in inquiries for listings were rostered so that everybody got an equal share.

Every Friday morning at 8 o'clock was a staff meeting in the office where training was given by George and progress was discussed of listings not having sold and praise was handed out for any sales made. There was no rule on how much time you had to be in the office and I noticed that some of the ladies, whose husbands had a full time job, did this real estate work on a part time basis and of course with the same result, part time income. As we were all supplied with a key to the office, I usually was the first one in there before everyone else showed up and got myself organized for the day.

I also got myself enrolled from the start of the school year at the Tafe College in Aberdeen Street in Northbridge. As I was striving to get my own office as soon as I could, I needed my own Real Estate Agents license, and therefore I had to pass six subjects. I worked it out to do three per year and I was lucky to do the first three all on the Wednesday. On these days I left home at seven in the morning, to beat the traffic into Perth, got into an empty classroom when the cleaners opened the building and did some study and attended the first lecture from 9 until 11 am. After that I found another empty

classroom to do more study and had half of the lunch that I brought with me from home and attended the second lecture from 2 until 4 pm. I stayed in the class room until 7 pm, doing more study and having the leftover lunch and then drove over to the Girls College in Subiaco for the last lecture of Law, which finished at 9 pm.

I thought that I might be falling asleep during this lecture, being Law and therefore expected it to be boring, but no way, this teacher was himself a Real Estate Agent, and the way he taught his subject was so interesting because he used things that happened in real life in the industry of real estate. He got you involved in trying to solve the problems that occurred. I learned a lot from him and utilized these things later on in life as contract law, and the understanding of it, is around us all the time. When I got home at 9.30 pm I would then have my dinner out of the oven to end my day of learning. It was also the only day of the week that I was not working as I always worked every Saturday and Sunday having two home opens on both those days.

During the month of May I found out that one of the reps in the office had listed a half finished home on a large piece of land at number 2646 Albany Highway between Gosnells and Kelmscott and of course it aroused my interest. I soon realized that there was a business opportunity here meaning that if I bought it and with the help of my boys finished it, there would be some good profit to be made. I did notice that there was some work to be done to the construction of the roof which was not quite right but that was not such a big deal.

After talking it over with the boys and Riet, I put in an offer and paid the deposit. Then after a few weeks I found out that there was going to be a delay in the settlement because of a dispute between the father, who owned the land, and the son, who had started to build the house. Until this dispute was sorted out, I was not prepared to spend any money on the house, just in case it turned sour and I was caught in the middle of it with a contract that could not be settled within my time frame. So I decided to just wait and see for the time being.

I had settled in well with the routine of getting listings and making sales and getting referrals from satisfied customers as people do talk if they are being looked after well. Two weeks before I started in Gosnells, two other guys started also new in this game and like me they got stuck into this work hard and serious with the result that the total sales figure of this office was increasing. Now at this time there were 12 offices of Roy Weston around Perth and the Morley office, which had just become the Head Office, had a total of twelve sales staff and they were always the number one office with the highest monthly sales figures. Morley just could not be beaten. Then in July Gosnells

did beat Morley and in September we did it again. I then had a talk to George Schaefer and said that I wanted to talk to Derrick Park, the Managing Director of Roy Weston, who had just moved into their new Head Office in Murray Street, West Perth.

Two days later I was sitting in front of him in his elaborate office. He had my file in front of him and he remarked on what I had said to George Schaefer back in my February interview at Gosnells where I said that I would show them what I could do. He explained to me that at this very moment they were in the process of restructuring the whole set up of Roy Weston and changing the existing branches into franchise offices, whereby the office managers would become the Franchisee of that office. The Franchisee would be totally responsible for running the franchise in his name with all the costs involved like rent, advertising and all the payments to their sales staff.

The Roy Weston business would be collecting, on a monthly basis, a 10% amount of the total sales commission earned by the franchise office, leaving the Franchisee with 90% of the commissions earned. Out of that he had to pay the sales staff 50% of their commissions, leaving 40% for the Franchisee to pay all the costs of advertising, rent, telephone and any other office expenses. If I could get a monthly sales figure of half what Gosnells had been doing lately, I would be laughing. Derrick Park also explained that the Franchisee was not expected to do any sales himself, like the Branch Managers who presently were not doing sales either. I pointed out to him though that if I was to start my own franchise, I very likely would be taking on all new sales staff that needed to be trained from scratch, so in order to get a solid start I would have to make sales myself in order to get a cash flow going. Derrick saw my point of view and allowed me to make sales myself, as long as I was not competing with the sales staff in obtaining listings from inquiries coming into the office and people calling in making inquiries on any listings that were advertised in the window or from newspaper adverts. I was happy with those conditions, as after all the more successful the sales staff would be, so would my franchise office be.

At the end of my discussion with Derrick Park he promised to get back to me within two weeks and I was happy to report to Riet that we were coming into the next stage of our business future. Two weeks later George told me that Derrick was happy with me as a Franchisee and suggested that I start looking for office space in the Forrestfield Forum Shopping Center. I also was invited to call into Head Office to discuss anything further and to sign documents.

I realized that I needed money now to set up my new office in the near future, so there was no point in waiting to see if the owners of the half finished house that I had bought had resolved their dispute as I now had no time to

finish this house. So in discussion with George Schaefer I decided to put it back on the market and advertise it as such, now as my own listing.

A couple of weeks later I got an interesting inquiry from a middle aged couple from Kelmscott by the name of Stan and Joyce Wooldridge, who were looking for a bigger piece of land and the half finished home, that was roomy, was what they could be interested in. In the end, after showing them the property and sorting out the dispute between father and son, I was able to write up an offer and acceptance with a price that was good enough for me to clear the expenses that I had incurred with the result that I made just a small profit on the whole deal. Lucky for me it was a cash deal so it was an unconditional contract. Of course during the process of doing business with the Wooldridges, they got to know me well enough to find out that we had eight sons.

George Schaefer came with me to look at the prospect of opening an office in the Forrestfield Forum and I soon realized that I had to get one with access to the outside as the shopping center would be closed over the Sundays and a Real Estate office was always open on a Sunday as well. I thought that the only way to find a shop was to talk to the people that were working in an outside shop and in doing this I talked to the lady that was in a bike shop. She told me that her husband was running a similar shop in Midland and that this one was a branch of that Midland shop and as she had had twin babies one year ago, she was keen to stay home and look after her babies but she was stuck with her lease on this shop.

I told her that I was happy to take over the lease and then she told me to see the leasing agents, who had a Real Estate office in this shopping center by the name of Dalyup Jones. When I approached them and made it known that I was planning to open a Roy Weston Franchise office, I was bluntly told that they would not allow it to happen and it was clear that they did not want real estate competition in the shopping center. I soon found out that the owners of this shopping center were a group of Italian market gardeners living in the hills beyond the Kalamunda region and after talking to Derrick Park, the Managing Director of Roy Weston, he gave me a letter of introduction and recommendation for me to use when I planned to pay a visit to each of the owners of the shopping center to explain that it would be in the interest of the shopping center for Roy Weston to be in this center. They agreed with this and jointly promised to instruct the leasing agents, Dalyup Jones, to allow us to take over the lease from the bike shop owner. The lady of the bike shop was as happy as we were and so was Derrick Park.

The first day of October was the take-over date for the lease giving me one month to reshape the shop with a reception area at the front and a partition

behind it for all the sales people to have their desks located in rows and my own private office directly behind the reception area. Terry and Jeff gave me a hand in doing the renovation work and on the 1st of November we had the official opening of our Roy Weston Franchise in Forrestfield. Leading up to this, as I was still going to school on the Wednesday to study for my own Real Estate Agents license, I was able to find someone with a Triannual Certificate who could cover me for my office with his license. His name was Keith Waterworth and he started in my office as a sales person with his name on the door as the licensee for this office. Also when I signed the lease documents one month before opening I started to advertise for sales reps, and by opening time I had started four new people, who had just finished their Real Estates sales person's course, and needed to be trained in the skills of listing and selling, which was my job from hereon.

One of the new sales persons was a Mrs. Lyn Travers who had a very natural way of dealing with people and soon became my top sales performer in the office. I spent a lot of time with the new people guiding them into how to acquire a listing and how to help people decide about putting in an offer on a house. I made the new sales reps realize that the best way to get on in real estate was to do as many Home Opens as possible on a Saturday and Sunday as that is where you meet more people to work with to either get new listings and prospective buyers.

Another thing that I did was, to approach Tony Clynk, Riet's brother, who was a Certified Accountant. I needed to set up a new company for my new business enterprise for the purpose of curbing my taxes as, if I was going to do well in Real Estate, I did not want to pay too much tax at the end of it.

So with his assistance I formed the company: "Oorschot Nominees Pty. Ltd. Trustee for the H.P. Oorschot Family Trust trading as Roy Weston Forrestfield". Also because I would be receiving deposits from people for the purchase of a property through my office, I had to open a trust account with the bank to hold these deposits until settlement. This is a requirement by law and therefore part of the business setup. I would have to do the administrating of this account as only I would be responsible for it. It did not take long for the office to be up and running and the other local agents, being Dalyup Jones and Granger Clark, did notice that we were around as they started to miss out on business that they would otherwise have had. Well that is free enterprise and I strongly believe in that. After a few months it got a bit crowded in the office with 10 sales people working but the sales figures were rising and that created a lot of excitement in the office and I was happy too.

The other offices started to notice this as well as there were now five Roy Weston Franchise offices around and the friendly competition between all the

offices and branches was actively on. Then at the end of May 1984, we had beaten all the other offices and branches and we were the number one office for that month, seven months after starting in Forrestfield. Once a month Roy Weston held a breakfast meeting for all the reps and their wives and partners of all the offices and branches and the early June meeting was in the Kings Park restaurant where they made the announcement of us being the number one for May and I can tell you it felt so good. The hard work had paid off and I was making good money.

By this time Jeff had met an English girl by the name of Hazel Graften living in Rockingham and of course she very quickly found out that he was one of eight boys. So when Jeff wanted to bring her home to introduce her to us, she made him drive around for a while as she was scared to be confronted with all these brothers of Jeff. She turned out to be a lovely girl who soon got friendly with all those brothers of Jeff and with us of course as well. They seemed to be madly in love and they soon set a date for their wedding day and it was to be on the 9th of February 1985. Terry went up north and started to work in Kununurra near Wyndham and Lake Argyle where they were developing the Argyle Diamond mine and there was a demand for tradesmen and carpenters as a lot of buildings were being built at the mine site.

With the 17th of October 1984 approaching, being our 25th wedding anniversary, and being on a Wednesday, I wanted to do something special, so I asked Riet to be at the office in Forrestfield at 10:45 am on that day as I wanted to take her out for lunch on this our special day. “Where are we going”, she asked and my reply was: “I am not telling you, wait and see”. So on this Wednesday she was at the office at the requested time and as she got in the car, up came the question: “Where are you taking me”? And my answer was again: “I am not telling you”. So from Forrestfield I got onto the Tonkin Highway driving North and she kept on asking: “Where are we going”? When we got to the Great Eastern Highway and I turned right she caught on and said: “What! Are we going to the airport”? I said: “Yes lunch is at Rottnest” and 20 minutes later we boarded a small twin engine eight seated plane and took to the sky heading west to Rotto.

It sure was a hell of a surprise for Riet but the way she had supported me through thick and thin all these years it was worth it to do something special for her and this certainly was. The lunch at the hotel at Rottnest was very romantic and by three o’clock in the afternoon we were back in Forrestfield and as I had kept it a secret from everybody in the office, some of the staff afterwards asked Riet where we had gone to, and Riet said that Henk took me by plane to Rottnest for lunch.

The very next day I was back at my schooling session for the full day in order to complete my studies to get my own Real Estate Agents License. I was doing well with my studies and I was confident I would pass the last three subjects by the end of the year. I must say that the success of the Forrestfield shop did spur me on to get the results that I was seeking and that was to have my own qualifications and have my own name on the door of the shop.

By now it was February 1985 and we had just had the wedding of Jeff and Hazel in Rockingham. My brother Bill and his wife Rikie, who were living on a country property in Mundijong, organized an Oorschot family reunion at their place which was well attended by many family members including our oldest son Terry who was back from his work in the north. Halfway through the afternoon Terry told us that he had to leave as the night before he had met a nice girl at a night club in the city and was meeting up with her parents at their place in Kelmscott. Apparently when she told her parents that she had met a nice bloke the night before and his name was Terry Oorschot, her mother said: “Yes we know him and he has seven brothers”. What a surprise this was to Jeannette, Terry’s new girlfriend, but the connection was soon explained and what a coincidence it was as her parents were the Wooldridge couple who had bought the house that was half finished along Albany Highway, that I sold to them about one year ago. Chris, who had been working already for two years for Victoria Cabinets, made a move to Commercial Industries in Bayswater. By now Kevin had the fortune to meet up with a lovely young lady by the name of Jane Moynihan who lived with her brother and parents north of the river. They had been going out for a while and were in the process of making serious plans for their future and then one day they announced their wedding date and that was to be on the 17th of May in 1986.

On my way to the office every morning, driving along Hale Road in Forrestfield, I noticed a vacant block of land on the corner of Dawson Avenue which was overgrown with wild life, had an old house on it which was not occupied and a solid concrete pool with a fallen down timber fence around it. It aroused my curiosity as I wondered why it was in such a state. As I looked around I noticed that there was a Real Estate Agents sign laying flat on the ground. It was an agent from the Kalamunda area and it looked like he had forgotten about this one.

To me this land screamed for it to be developed and I thought that I might be the right person to do this as I knew that owning property was the way to go. Now I could easily find out who the owners were but as a Real Estate Agent myself, this would be unethical, so I contacted the Agent in Kalamunda to inquire about it and what price there was on it. I was sure that the listing had



Dawson Village in Dawson Avenue Forrestfield.

been expired but he did not say that and was going to get back to me. The next day he informed me that the asking price was $130,000.

Next I went to the Shire of Kalamunda and spoke to the building surveyor, Duncan Wilson, and discussed what I had in mind for this property if I decided to buy it. It was a full hectare of land, (10,000 sq metres), and I was planning to create seven building blocks along Hale Road and a unit site behind it facing Dawson Av. My question was: "Would the Shire support my application for a re-zoning to R30 for the unit site"? R30 means allowing 30 dwellings per 10,000 sq metres. The unit site would be 3,400 sq metres and at a R30 rating I could build 13 units on it. The town planner that I then spoke to, Steve Tan, said that the Shire would support my application for this R30 re-zoning. I realized that the Shire would, as a result of my development plans, be receiving in the future twenty lots of Shire rates instead of one for the large block of land. They also gave me the name of a development planner who would design a plan along my requirements and his name was Ray Belton. I also was given the name of a local civil engineer from Gooseberry Hill, by the name of Geoff Dutton, who did do a lot of work for the Shire, to design the extension to the main sewer. With this knowledge I worked out the details of the offer that I was prepared to make to the Kalamunda agents.

On the first of May 1985 I put in an offer with a purchase price of $125,000 which included a deposit of $5,000 and, a further payment of $40,000 by the 1st of September. At this date I could then take possession of the site to clear the land and put in the sewer extension and the fence between the back of the

Hale Road blocks and unit site, with the settlement date planned for the end of January 1986.

With no finance clause this was an unconditional offer and I was happy to find out the next day that the offer was accepted including all the details that I had stipulated. I organized straight away to put the rezoning and subdivision application in with the Shire and had the sewer extension designed by the engineer all in preparation for starting work on site once the approvals were in place. The next thing in my plan was to start pre-selling the seven blocks with the settlement of them to coincide with the settlement of the large block that I bought. This way the money that I would get from the blocks would pay for the big one on the same day and I would not have to borrow any money to pay for the land. The end result was that I got the unit site for nothing and that was a good start. By advertising in my shop window it did not take long to get enquiries for the blocks along Hale Road and one of the buyers was our own son Terry who saw the value of buying a block at this stage of his life.

In the cycle of business there are always ups and downs and at this time the interest rates had been rising resulting in real estate sales slowing down. It did not slow me down in what I had set out to do. I had a talk with the BankWest bank manager in Maddington and he was happy to grant me a loan to build the 13 units when I was ready although it would be at the high rate of interest.

Riet was a bit worried about it but she trusted me on what I saw as a good business opportunity. I also had a discussion with Derrick Park about what I had bought and what my plans were for the future of my shop. I made it known to him that after the units were finished I was contemplating selling the Real Estate office and devoting my time to doing development work. Also well before this time I had received my own Real Estate Agents license and my Triannual Certificate.

Located on the corner of Hale Road and Welshpool Road just outside of Forrestfield was the business of Soils aint Soils and through the office I got to know the manager and I found out that they were doing a lot of business with the builders who were building the Burswood Casino complex as they were the suppliers of sand to the project. I noticed that at their place of business they had a number of palm trees and as there were about 15 palm trees on the block that I had just bought, I realized that there must be some value in them and they would be cut down when we were ready to clear the block which would be a shame.

After talking to this manager from Soils aint Soils we agreed to do a swap. He would take out all the palm trees and in return would supply all the filling sand that I would need to fill in the swimming pool and any sand that I would

need for the sand pads for the units. These palm trees would eventually end up at the Burswood Casino when that was nearing completion.

I liked doing deals like that. When I paid the next amount of money of $40,000 to the Agents as per the contract, I got the manager from Goldfield Contractors W.A. from Bayswater to give me a price for clearing the block and heaping all the trees to be burned on site and then afterwards to break up the concrete swimming pool. Two days later they brought two large D9 bulldozers to the block with large massive steel hooks behind them and three days later all that was left was a heap of concrete rubble and a huge pile of trees ready to be burned.

One of the clients of Lyn Travers, my successful sales lady in the office, was a small time earthmoving contractor who had a large front end loader and lived just outside Forrestfield on a large block and his name was David Breeze. I got him to dig a three metres wide trench about three meter deep just inside the front boundary of Dawson Avenue some twenty metres long for two purposes. One was to bury all the rubble that was on the block from the swimming pool and the old house that was there and the other one was that this way I got a lot of clean sand that I could use for the sand pads for the units. This would be a lot cheaper than carting all the rubbish away.

Through the Shire Planner, Steve Tan, I was introduced to a Russell Jones who lived at the end of Lewis Road in Forrestfield and he worked from his home as an architectural draftsman. He did all his drafting work on his computer and I was impressed with the way he was doing this, so I engaged him to do the designs for the 13 units in Dawson Avenue. In his design we would have three lots of duplexes and seven single units.

Now was also the time to employ the local plumber who I also had met before through the office. His name was Koos van de Kooy and he lived in Sultana Road in Maida Vale just outside of Forrestfield. I needed him to put in the sewer extension which was to serve the seven blocks and all the units. The next thing that needed to be done was the corrugated asbestos Hardy fence to be put in along the back of the seven blocks along Hale Road. I had found out before, that there was a shortage of these sheets, so I had placed my order early and at the start of December I got the message that they would deliver the 110 sheets that I had ordered, the next day. I would be on site so I could direct them where to drop them off. It was on a Wednesday that they were delivered and the very next day 15 sheets were stolen. The plan was that some of my boys were going to give me a hand to dig the trench and put them in the ground so the next two days I spent in my car from six at night until the next morning guarding my sheets and I was lucky to get the stolen sheets replaced so that we could finish the fence over the weekend.

The end of January 1986 was there soon enough and I was ready to settle the purchase of the large block as all the seven blocks along Hale Road were pre-sold. I had plenty of cash available, with even some to spare, so I started to prepare the sand pads for the units. I figured that as there was enough light in the morning and at night I could put in long days starting at six in the morning, working until 10 o'clock and back to the office until 2 in the afternoon followed by another session on the block until about dark at night. I brought some extra food along to see me through during the day with my evening meal out of the oven at night. It was amazing the amount of work that I got done this way and every time concrete was to be poured Terry would give me a hand to do it.

Talking about Terry I should mention here that the relationship with Jeannette was turning out to be a serious one and they announced their plans to get married on the 25th of October of that year being 1986.

I soon got the bricklayers working and I contracted a local carpenter Jim Osboine and his son Warren to put on the roofs as we went along. I found a plasterer who lived in Maida Vale by the name of Colin Evans, who turned out to be very reliable and was on the job every time as planned. What I intended to do was to rent the units out, so I started at the very back, which was unit 10, and then worked my way towards the front.

We were about half way through the construction when we had a visit from a member of the plasterers union checking up if the plasterers onsite were members of his union. He talked to Colin Evans and as Colin was not a member, he was going to force the closure of the site, unless they would join the union on the spot. Colin was not interested in the union and it looked like this union bastard was going to close the job and I could not afford a stoppage on the job. So, I offered to pay this union bloke the union fee of Colin and his mate, and requested that he leave us alone. He agreed as long as I paid him the cheque on the spot and I did although Colin was not happy about it.

The next day I was at the bank and I mentioned the incident of the plasterers union to the bank manager and although he understood my situation, he was totally disgusted by this union man blackmailing me into paying the union fees. He offered to immediately put a "stop payment" on this particular cheque and I was more than happy for his stance and action on this matter.

Work carried on as if nothing had happened and I never heard anything more about it. From there on we never had any more union trouble on the job. As the job progressed we started to get enquiries in the office from people interested in renting a unit which was promising. We soon got the main driveway from Dawson Avenue right up to unit 10 laid by the local paving bloke Frank Zappacosta. Frank lived in Hale Road almost opposite Terry's block

and proved to be very handy so close by. Riet came over to clean the inside of number 10 one day and as she was doing this a Mrs. Margaret Keogh walked on site and saw Riet doing the cleaning and asked to talk to the builder. I was working inside one of the other units and I soon got talking to her. She said that she was very impressed with the speed that the works were progressing and as she was living just up the road in Solandra Way, the activity had not escaped her. She said that she wanted to talk to me and invited me to her home that evening.

So when I called in at her place she told me that her husband was an invalid in a wheelchair and she was working as a teacher at the local primary school. They owned a property in Palin Street in Palmyra and she was interested in developing it. There was a very old house on it and it was already zoned R30 so it would take three units. The question was would I be interested to build these three units and give her one back in return without her spending any money on it? She explained that she had a builder friend, who lived just outside Forrestfield, who was given the opportunity to do this one year ago and he had not given her an answer at this stage. I saw her on the Friday evening and I told her that I would consider it over the weekend and look her up on the following Monday evening. Her offer was very welcome to me as I was already considering selling the Real Estate shop once the units were finished and I wanted continuity of work in the same line as I was doing now.

After inspecting the site in Palmyra and doing my sums over the weekend and checking with the Melville City Council, I worked out my proposal to Mrs. Keogh and saw her on the Monday night as promised. She had already told me that the layout of unit 10, the one she saw Riet cleaning, was what she wanted for her unit in the back of the Palmyra development with some small changes to the bathroom. However I pointed out that if we were to come to an agreement on this I would want the freedom to design and build the other two units with a large family room in order to make the whole concept attractive enough for me to take on. She was amazed that I gave her an answer in three days while her builder friend could not even do that in one year. We drew up a formal agreement and stipulated a starting time for early November 1986. The next thing I did was get a copy of the land title with measurements and pay a visit to Russell Jones for him to prepare the drawings and specifications.

Following this I went to see Derrick Park, the Managing Director of Roy Weston and informed him of my plans for the shop. I knew that Keith Waterworth would be keen to buy the Franchise from me so when I approached him about this he was all for it and we agreed on a takeover price for the office with all the office furniture complete. At this point of time I had to make a change to my business name, changing the wording: “trading as Roy Weston Forrest-

field" into: "trading as Oorschot Realty" and had new letterheads printed accordingly. I gave the development in Dawson Avenue a name and called it Dawson Village and my son Kevin made up a nice name board to be mounted above the letterboxes at the front. He made that sign just before moving to Karratha in August, three months after getting married. Jane was working for the United Credit Union in Perth and got a transfer to the office in Karratha.

With Terry's and Jeannette's wedding coming up on the 25th of October, they decided to rent unit 9, which was directly behind their block that Terry bought in Hale Road. This would make it easier for him when he was ready to build his home on his block. With all the units rented out in Dawson Village, by the time it was completed by early September, I thought that both of us had earned a holiday so we took off to Tasmania for a fortnight and that did the both of us the world of good. I was really worn out after the building of Dawson Village and I knew that I would enjoy the break and just be with Riet alone for a while. Then when we got back to Perth there were a few things happening. These included the handing over of the office to Keith Waterworth, the organizing of pulling down the old house in Palin Street Palmyra and getting the building approval from the Melville City Council. Also Terry and Jeannette's wedding was just around the corner in October so there was plenty to keep me occupied.

While I was waiting for the building approval for Palmyra, I sort of looked around in Forrestfield as I would not mind doing another development there somewhere and then I noticed driving around that almost opposite the golf course in Hartfield Road there was someone with a fruit tree growing business and along side of it there was a strip of vacant land behind the houses in Connaught Street. Behind the house in Hartfield Road there was a large orchard, with mainly orange trees, that apparently was not being attended to at all as there was a lot of fruit lying on the ground and this land on the back was bordering Essex Street. I checked with the Kalamunda Shire, where by now I was no stranger, to find out if a development would be in order with a rezoning application for part of that land if I was able to acquire a major part of it. However I was told that they would only support a rezoning application for R25 and I was happy with that which meant that I could have all single units without having to incorporate duplexes in the design. At this stage I had not approached the owners whom I found out from the Shire were Italians. Their names were Domenic and Maria Giovanazzi.

The next evening I called in at their home and introduced myself and in short outlined my reason for calling in. I realized that I could not push them into a decision at that moment as they seemed very conservative in their thinking and I wanted to make sure that they understood the advantage to

them for going along with my plan. In talking to him it was clear that at this stage of his life he wanted to tone down the activity of his business which was basically creating fruit trees in small pots for sale mainly to nurseries. They had a family of six children who were not interested in continuing with him in his business, so he needed to slow down his work as he was getting on and his health was not a hundred percent anymore either. I outlined my plans for this land of his and invited him to think it over and discuss it with his family and I would call in again in a week's time to have a further talk to them about it. From the Shire I found out that the land behind the houses in Connaught Street belonged to a man living in Kingsley, north of the river. I thought it wise not to do anything about this until I had a contract on paper about the large piece of land with the Italian owners, so I had to bide my time.

Now with the good chance of pulling this off, I started to plan how I was going to develop all this land, assuming that the Giovanazzi family would keep about 2000 square metres (1/2 acre) and continue their business on a small scale. When I called back one week later they had talked with their family and were happy to discuss with me what their thoughts were and what I had in mind on how to develop all this land. My thinking of about 2000 metres for themselves was what they were looking at also, but as they had three sons they also wanted to provide a building block of land for each of them put in their name and a lump sum of money for the rest of the land. After a lot of explaining what was involved in doing this project, like main sewer extension from Hartfield Road, main water extension and a cul-de-sac bitumen road, also from Hartfield road with storm water disposal included, and subdivision costs with the Kalamunda Shire, we agreed to a lump sum of $105,000 of which I would pay a deposit of $10,000 and a further $40,000 when the rezoning was approved by the Shire.

With this second payment I would get possession of the land to start doing the clearing and sewer extension. I would cover the cost of subdivision and providing the title deeds for the three blocks for their sons and I would also install a super six Hardy fence around their 2000 meter block on which the family home stood. To cover myself, in case I was not able to buy the other strip of land from the bloke in Kingsley, I had to put in the offer to Domenic and Maria Giovanazzi a clause subject to me being able to acquire the strip of land behind the Connaught Street blocks. In the final analyses I would finish up with 24 building blocks of which three went back to the Giovanazzi family and a unit site big enough to allow 13 units to be build on it.

With the offer signed with Domenic and Maria Giovanazzi, I was now ready to telephone the fellow in Kingsley, telling him that I wanted to talk to him about the land that he owned in Forrestfield, and he was happy to see me.

When I was there I explained that I had bought the land adjoining his land and that I was interested in buying his strip of land. On its own he could not do anything with it as it had no road frontage except a small bit at the Hartfield Road end and if he did not sell it to me he would be left with some land of little value. He was now well aware of this and it did not take a lot of persuasion from my part to convince him to sell it to me and so I was able to buy it for a very reasonable price and I was ready to get the ball rolling in Hartfield Road.

By now Terry had become a fully qualified builder in his own right. Lyn Travers and her husband Michael had bought an hectare block of land on the corner of Brewer Road and Bruce Road in Maida Vale and were interested for me to build their home. That was a nice offer from them but I did not want to start building houses for other people, so I recommended for them to approach Terry. Lyn knew Terry already through the office so Terry finished up taking on the job to build their home. For Terry it was his first home to build under contract and I gave him a hand with the setting out on the job and the pouring of the concrete and he was on his way. With his wedding with Jeannette now taken care of, he moved in at unit 9 Dawson Village. Shortly after that, Terry took out one sheet of fencing out of the adjoining fence between his block and the unit and made a start building his house in Hale Road.

While waiting for the old house in Palmyra to be cleared and the site to be prepared, I spent some time with the guy that did the planning of the land in Dawson Avenue, Ray Belton, to formulate my plans for the Forrestfield development. This large piece of land and the unit site for 13 units on a R25 zoning and the cul-de-sac road in the middle would service all the blocks and the unit site at the end of the cul-de-sac. Next was the civil engineer, Geoff Dutton, the one that I used before in Dawson Village, to prepare the designs for the sewer extension, storm water layout and road construction and get all the necessary approvals for these works from the various departments. While all this preparation work was going on I went back to Palmyra to start with doing concrete footings and floor slabs ready for the bricklayers and I also put up a For Sale sign, as I was keen to attract a buyer for the front and middle unit which would become mine to sell in the deal that I made with Margaret Keogh. I said unit but because of the additional family room in these two, I should call them villas. It did not take long for the bricklayers to get the walls up on the back unit, so I started with the roof, putting on the ceiling joists and cutting out all the rafters and creepers and then Terry came out to give me a hand in pitching the roof and finishing it ready for the gutters and roof tiles. I used the same electrical contractor that I had for Dawson Village, a Frank Mattaboni, who lived just outside Forrestfield along Hawtin Road. I had

a short break waiting for the bricklayers to finish the middle villa, so I spent some time in Forrestfield.

While I was waiting for the rezoning approval to come through I asked permission from Domenic Giovanazzi to do the clearing of the land as there were a lot of fruit trees from the old orchard. So I got David Breeze with his frontend loader to pull them all out and heap them in a pile ready to be burnt including some other larger trees as well. While this was going on we had someone calling in on the job asking for work. His name was Bob Harris and he lived in Forrestfield close by. He explained to me that he was with the merchant navy and was home for long periods of time and could do with work at those times. I told him that there was certainly work for him at times and that I would stay in touch with him and call him when needed. As the heaped up trees needed drying out a bit, I went back to put the roof on the middle villa in Palmyra with Terry and then it was fruit tree burning time in Forrestfield. With the help of a can of petrol I soon had the lot burning like a bonfire and the smell of fresh oranges was very strong in the air to the point that some of the neighbours remarked about it.

I got a call from the engineer Geoff Dutton, who was preparing the design for the sewer extension. In the design the engineer had planned a 6 inch diameter pipe line along the northern boundary of the whole of my land, which was OK with the Water Authority but the size of this pipe line needed to be increased to 9 inches, in order to accommodate any future extension beyond my land in Forrestfield and they were willing to compensate me for the extra cost with an amount of $21,000. I was surprised at this amount but was very happy to accept the contribution as they easily could have made it a condition of approval without any compensation at all as condition of any subdivision is always putting in all the services at the expense of the developer. With the third roof and the roof tiles on in Palmyra, I could leave the job alone allowing all the other trades to do their work while I could get to work at putting in the main sewer extension at the Hartfield Road project.

Now I have never put in a main sewer but to me it is just another building job however in the ground instead of above the ground. The engineer was concerned that I wanted to do it myself, so I talked to my regular plumber Koos van de Kooy who did the small sewer extension at the Dawson Village job and after explaining to him how I was planning to tackle the job, he was prepared to cover the job with his plumber’s license and he would occasionally check on how I was going. The next thing I did was to talk to my friendly machine operator David Breeze, who knew the site by now as he had cleared all the fruit trees for me before. He would have to dig a trench up to three metres deep as a normal backhoe could not do the job. It needed to be a bigger



Syrian Villas at 313-315 Canning Highway Palmyra.

and stronger machine, so he suggested that he could hire one from a mate of his for a realistic price and do the digging for me whenever I was ready for it. From what I had seen before with the digging out of the fruit trees, the ground was pretty hard because of the clay and gravel content so there would not be any danger of the sides collapsing at least not in the summer season.

In Palmyra I decided to put some class in the finishing touches internally so I choose to use polished jarrah for the kitchen cupboards and that really looked impressive and would help to make a sale.

By early February 1987 I had David Breeze on the job in Forrestfield digging the trench one meter away from the northern boundary starting from the main sewer man-hole that was located on the corner of Hartfield Road and Connaught Street. Before starting, I called in at every owner in Connaught Street that was bordering onto my land as I had to provide a 4 inch diameter sewer connection, as part of the sewer design, in their back yards, one meter inside their property. This would allow them in the future to connect their property to the sewer as at this stage that part of Forrestfield had no main sewer available. As the land in Forrestfield slopes up towards the east, to the hills, it worked out well and the sewer was going to be a gravity drain sewer with a gradual fall to this manhole, so the digging had to be accurate according to the levels indicated on the detailed plans from the consulting engineer. At about every sixty meter interval I had to construct a manhole of nine inches thick brickwork on a concrete base with galvanized steel foot steps bricked in internally to provide a ladder inside the manhole.

At the main sewer manhole I was given a starting level to begin with. The fall in the new sewer was to be 40 cm in every 100 meter run and that equaled to 1.6 cm per every 4 metres. I will explain later why the fall in 4 metres. Also following the specifications on the working drawings, the plastic pipes had to be laid on a bed of at least 20 cm of clean sand. The engineer made it clear to me that after the 9 inch pipes were laid the back fill had to be compacted in layers to prevent the soil settling later on. This also meant that when doing the compacting the sand under the sewer pipe would also compact and therefore the gradual slope would finish up being distorted creating low levels between the manholes. So I thought it wise to compact the sand filling under the pipes first. While David was digging this trench I got him also to dig from the main trench into the back of the adjoining blocks along Connaught Street for about 1½ metres to allow me to put in the future sewer connections for these properties. The first thing that I did after David was finished digging out the whole of the trench, was to locate the position of the new manholes so that I could pour all the concrete bases at the same time and at the correctly calculated levels. Before David took his front-end loader away I got him to put a layer of clean filling sand all the way in the trench and then, starting from the main manhole, and using my own 18 inch plate compactor I began to compact the sand from the main manhole to the first concrete base.

By this time I got Bob Harris, my new labourer, to join me and using my level instrument I put a paving brick at 4 meter intervals and 1.6 cm higher every time creating the required fall of 40 cm per every 100 metres as per the engineering plans. I also had to cut a hole in the side of the main man hole to allow the first 9 inch plastic pipe to be mounted in that. Now with my 4 meter aluminium screed I needed to screed on the paving bricks all the way to the next manhole location to create a perfect slope to the required grade ready to take the 9 inch pipes which were in 6 meter lengths. The one thing that was hard to take was the fact that in February/March it was stinking hot and down 2 to 3 metres in the trench it was even hotter. With the help of Bob we were making good process and as we were getting along I got the bricklayers to brick up one manhole after the other as we were laying the pipes.

We were about half-way through this process when I got a visit from the inspector of the Water Authority. He remarked about my way of doing it with compacting and screeding the sand underneath the pipes to set levels, but he was satisfied that the end result would be good enough for a pass. He explained that later on when all the back filling was done and compacted in layers he would come back to sight through the pipe, using mirrors from one manhole to the next one to check if there were any sags which would slow down the fall of the sewerage finding its way down hill in the pipe. If there was



The new cul-de-sac off Hartfield Road: "LEIDEN PLACE"

a sag in the sighting through the pipe it would show as an oval shape and then he would have to condemn it and it would have to be dug up and corrected. I was sure that my method of doing it would guarantee that the pipe would have a perfect fall without any faults. I did not want to leave this sewer job until it was fully completed and passed before going back to Palmyra to complete the last things that needed to be done there such as the brick paving and the fences between the three units. I did get some enquiries from the For Sale sign, which were promising, but nothing definite came from it. As soon as the units were completely finished I was planning home opens every Sunday afternoon and I knew by past experience that I would get results. In the meantime Kevin made up a large sign for the Hartfield Road job in Forrestfield showing the whole layout of all the blocks and the unit site with the cul-de-sac road through the middle of it in various colours. It certainly made the telephone ring.

On the home front things were happening too. Trevor had been attending the Thornlie Primary school and doing quite well. He was keen to join in with the school sports and on the Saturday mornings Riet was taking him to Tee-ball games where he was going hell for leather hitting the ball while his Mum was watching him and encouraging him on the sidelines. The remarks were made by the other mothers around, how nice that it was that his grandmother was taking him to Tee-ball. This was not appreciated by both mother and child as Trevor yelled out that she was his mother.

From birth there was always a special bond between the two of them, probably because at that time it was such a close call. Paul and Dean had finished their high school studies and Paul got a job in a wood machining shop learning the trade of wood machining. While he was working there he was unlucky

to get his hand caught in an overhead router that cost him half of the ring finger of his left hand. In the following years he would stick this left over half finger in his nose as if he was poking his whole finger up his nose and smaller kids found this quite hilarious and I think he did too. Dean had no interest in continuing studying and as he was the sort of kid that mixed easily with people, he finished up working at the Pizza Hut in Gosnells where he was well liked. Before that he got a job in Armadale working in a restaurant called the Gipsy Barron on late afternoons and evenings and it was his Mum who made the trip of taking him there and picking him up later on in the evening. When he worked at the Pizza Hut he went there on his bike, which was a lot nicer for his Mum. Chris, after working for two years with Victoria Cabinets, was transferred to Commercial Industries in Bayswater and was doing well and happy in his chosen field. Tim eventually got an apprenticeship in Mandurah as a chef at the Atrium after starting his training at Horsefeathers in the city on the corner of William Street and Murray Street.

When he was in his final year of his apprenticeship at the Atrium, he was selected with six other final year students from around Australia to compete in a sort of Olympic cooking competition in Canada and he came back with a gold medal. Well done Tim! We were very proud of his achievements. Terry made a start at building his own house on his block in Hale Road and as mentioned before, to make it easier he took out one sheet out of the fence between the unit 9 in Dawson Village where he and Jeannette were living and his block directly behind it.

His was an unusual design with a square atrium above the roof over the family and games room. It had four timber windows in a square with windows that could open allowing good ventilation in the area underneath. Under these windows there was a large lead tray for draining any water back onto the roof tiles. Then one morning he found that some bastard had got onto the roof and cut away most of the lead as there was money in lead for making sinkers for the fishing industry. Of course Terry was livid.

The next thing was the road leading off Hartfield Road into the new subdivision. I obtained two quotes for doing the complete job including road base, concrete curbing and hot mix bitumen finish and all the storm water requirements including connecting it to the storm water main line at the other side of Hartfield Road, all as detailed on the consulting engineer’s drawings. When I eventually received them I was surprised at the high amounts that both of these road construction contractors quoted me and also that they wanted a 25% deposit paid with acceptance of their quote. I tell you it got me thinking. I had a talk to my friend David Breeze and I got some prices for the hot mix and concrete curbing and I thought: why can’t I do this myself, knowing that this



Margaret Village at the end of Leiden Place, Forrestfield.

way it would be a lot cheaper. Besides that it would mean that I was busy doing something other than just watching other people doing it. I also thought that it would be a challenge to do this myself. As part of the requirements for the approval of the subdivision, a surveyor had to install all the boundary survey pegs for all the blocks. Having these pegs in position made it easier for me to set out the exact location of the road by measuring back from these survey pegs and all the measurements were of course all shown on the consulting engineer's drawings.

It did not take long for David and his frontend loader to prepare the ground with the required slope towards Hartfield Road so that the road base could be delivered in place as David did the leveling out. I had already made enquires about hiring a big steel drum roller, one of those that you sometimes see on road construction jobs, with two big tyres and a cabin mounted over the top. It was a really heavy duty machine that should be able to compact the road base well and it sure did. I was sitting in this cabin for three full days to compact it all to the engineer's satisfaction, who kept on testing as I went along.

While all this activity was going on, I received a letter from the planning department of the Kalamunda Shire, explaining that I, as the developer of this subdivision, was entitled to name the new street in this development. I was not aware of this so I thought here is my chance to name this cul-de-sac using the name that I had reserved for my first girl that we never had. As you may remember that when Riet and I got married we jokingly made a deal that she was going to name all the boys and I was going to name all the girls. What a rotten deal that was! So my name selection was Margaret Place

and I notified the Kalamunda Shire of my selection. A few days later another letter came from the Kalamunda Shire, informing me that there were already two Margaret streets within the Shire so they could not accept my selection and advised me to come up with another name. As I wanted to use the name Margaret in this development I thought about calling the village at the end of the cul-de-sac Margaret Village and after talking to Riet what to use for the new road I came up with using my birth place back in Holland.

As you may remember I was born in Leiden which is North West of Rotterdam. So I notified the Shire that my new selection was LEIDEN PLACE and I explained my reason for this choice. They were happy to allow this name to be used and that was it. In the next Perth Street Directory it appeared with the correct spelling and I was happy about that. With the road base finished the concrete curbing contractors came in to install the curbing. As the whole cul-de-sac was falling for its full length towards Hartfield Road, I only had to install one storm water sump on either side of the new road near the junction of Hartfield Road and these were put in place before the road base went in. Next was the bitumen hot mix contractor and with that in place the whole job looked really finished.

But it was not finished as I still had to connect the storm water sumps to the main storm water line on the other side of Hartfield Road. In order to do this I had to open up the road and that was a job for the next weekend. I borrowed some traffic diversion signs from the Kalamunda Shire depot and used them first around where I was cutting with a diamond saw through the existing road surface in Hartfield Road. Then early Saturday morning David Breeze was there with his backhoe to open up the road allowing Bob and I to lay the concrete drain pipes with a slight fall to the main drain across the road. By Sunday evening it was all back-filled and compacted for the hot mix people to repair the surface first thing Monday morning. All that I now needed to do was install the water mains connecting to the mains water line in Hartfield Road, all again as per the structural engineer's drawings. When that was finished the gas company as well as Telecom would come in and install their extensions, all this of course between the concrete curbing and the front boundary pegs.

With everything completed now the Kalamunda Shire was able to officially approve the subdivision and we could apply for the issuing of the title deeds from the Titles Office and with them I could proceed with the settlements of the sales of some of the blocks that I had been able to make so far. Yippee, there was finally some money coming back after paying out so much during the works being done on this project. It certainly put a smile on Riet's face.

By now it was about April 1987 and Terry had just finished building his house and was happy to move out of the unit and into his new home and enjoy the space of the house compared with the much smaller unit.

While I was flat out working on this project at Hartfield Road I got a phone call from Margaret Keogh, wanting for me to come and see her at home just off Dawson Avenue. So when I got there, she again expressed her delight with the way that I had approached the Palin Street development and how happy she was with her unit at the back of it. She told me that her son had moved in and was enjoying living there. Then the surprise came by means of the next question! Would I be interested in doing another development along the same lines as the one in Palin Street? Of course my answer was: “Yes I would”. She then went on to explain that she and her husband owned two old houses side by side along Canning Highway very close to Palin Street. I promised to look at it in a few days time as I was still very busy working in Hartfield Road. Then on the following morning I spent some time looking over these two houses and the land around it and noticed that both the houses needed a lot of maintenance which would cost a lot of money and would not greatly improve their value and as there were tenants living in them the gardens looked pretty bad. I also noticed that the land was sloping towards the back for at least half a meter. A visit to the Melville City Council revealed that the zoning was already R30 and the total land area was 2600 sq metres meaning that I could build a total of 7 villas on the total land. While I was at the Council I got a copy of the block plans which I needed just in case the deal went ahead.

There were a number of things that would add costs to this project. Firstly the cost of demolishing the old houses and then the fact that the land was sloping down towards the back which meant a lot of filling and compacting of that and further I would have to put in retaining walls along the back and side boundaries. On top of this the cost of the amalgamation of both blocks into one title deed. I needed at least a full week at night to do my sums before I could have a further discussion with Margaret Keogh. When I had all the figures worked out I called her and saw her again at her home. She already knew from her talks with the Melville City Council that the maximum amount of units or villas that could be built on the combined land was 7. Naturally, when I was building the Palin street job, she had a good look at the front villas that I was building for myself and she liked the family room setup that I had incorporated in them and of course that made them so much more attractive to a buyer and that were what she wanted for herself also.

I explained that I was planning for seven villas all with family rooms similar to the ones in Palin Street with polished jarrah finish to the kitchen cupboards and built in wardrobes to all the bedrooms. Then she got greedy

and said that she wanted three villas for herself out of this development of seven. I was stunned at that moment and on the other hand I did not want to insult her by saying that she had got greedy. I had already worked out that her reward out of this would be two villas in return for the land.

I realized that I needed to show her that three villas for her were just not possible so I followed by explaining in detail what was involved in doing this project. In summing up I explained all the things that I had to attend to and they were the demolishing of the two old houses, putting in retaining walls along the rear and side boundaries and because of putting in the retaining walls all the existing old picket fences had to be replaced with new Hardy fences. Then the carting in of clean filling sand and compacting it to density of seven blows to the foot measured on a penotrometer and the cost of amalgamating the two blocks on the one title in order to be able to build the seven villas. I further went on to explain the comparison to the job in Palin Street where there were no retaining walls, sand filling and no amalgamation required.

The extra villa to me was needed to cover the extra costs involved in this development of seven villas. I was glad that she understood my explanation and in the end she was happy to receive the two villas for herself out of this deal. She did stipulate that she wanted the two villas at the back location which was fine with me. I could not blame her for trying to get the bottom out of the can. What did amaze me was that she did not ask for all this to be formerly documented on a deed by a solicitor, as I put all what we had agreed upon on my official business letterhead of Oorschot Realty and we both signed it in confirmation of our agreement. It was obvious that she fully trusted me and I was happy about that.

The next step was to see our very capable designer Russell Jones in Forrestfield, who at this stage was working flat out on the design and layout of what was to become Margaret Village at the end of Leiden Place. I showed him the block plan of the two old houses in Palmyra along the Canning Highway and explained to him what I had in mind being seven up market villas with a family room included in the design and polished jarrah kitchen cupboards much as he had done in Palin Street before. Jokingly he said that he now needed to sell his bed as he had no use for it for a while, that’s how busy he was at the moment.

I organized the same demolition contractor from Spearwood that pulled down and cleared the old house in Palin Street to do the same with the two houses along Canning Highway. The town planning guy that did all the planning for me before in Forrestfield, Ray Belton, was put to work to do the paper work for the amalgamation of the two blocks in Palmyra and to organize for the provision of a new title in our company’s name before I could submit the

plans and specifications to the Melville City Council for approval. It was for the cash flow in my business that I now wanted to push for the Palmyra seven villas to get started while I also wanted to sell as many blocks as possible in Leiden Place, Forrestfield. With the subdivision now approved and the titles now in my possession, every block sale could now be settled quickly and the cash would help me to build Palmyra without having to borrow money for that, and looking ahead with the seven villas finished and my five sold, I would be able to build Margaret Village with the profits made from them. So I was anxious to get started on the seven villas.

By the time that the blocks were cleared I was able to pick up the building permit from the Melville City Council and I was ready to start. I decided to use for retaining walls the concrete post and panel type method as that was something that I could do myself instead of getting someone to do a brick or stone wall job. The one that I decided to use was also the most economical solution and I was able to do it on my own although Terry came over at times to give me a hand. The concrete posts and panels came from a factory in Wanneroo and were delivered on site. I had my cement shed on site with a site toilet (hole in the ground type) and with sand and blue metal also delivered I was ready to mix concrete in my own concrete mixer for around the concrete posts which were set exactly half in the ground and half out meaning that a 1200 mm post would be 600 mm in the ground. The panels were 300 mm wide and 1800 mm long giving me a 600 mm high retaining wall and that was just enough on this job. On the boundary all around there were a lot of old timber picket fences, most of them in a bad state and after talking to the adjoining owners (one being Margaret Keogh), they were quite happy to share the cost of a new corrugated Hardy asbestos fence and help me with the installation of it after the retaining walls were in place.

From here on there was a lot of activity with trucks delivering clean filling sand, David Breeze with his bobcat leveling out in layers and me with a heavy duty diesel operated 6002 plate compactor, which had a four foot square base plate, walking up and down compacting to a density of at least 7 blows to the foot measured on a penotrometer. Three days later when we reached the required level over the whole block, I kept on compacting for another day just to make sure. I tell you, after that period of compacting all day, I was still shaking every night when I drove home. There was nothing more monotonous than walking behind that bloody compactor all day but it just needed to be done. Now the more interesting part was replacing all the fences around the retaining walls and making the site more like a building block screaming out for the building works to start. As always I worked long days from six in the morning until six at night and I soon had a visitor in the form

of Margaret Keogh checking out the progress on site. She was still working as a school teacher in Forrestfield so her visit was late in the afternoon. She made it known that she was very happy with the change already from the old houses with the dilapidated gardens to this clean building site all surrounded with nice looking fences above the retaining walls.

Starting from the back I began with putting in the concrete slabs ready for the bricklayers and as the regular subcontractors from before were still keen to work again for me there was soon a beehive of activity on site. As before, my son Kevin, through his mate here in Perth, organized another sign for me advertising the five villas for sale and as it was on the highway we did get plenty of enquiries from the start.

Talking about Kevin, he and Jane came down to Perth for Christmas and while here they looked around to buy a block of land and ended up buying a block at 89 Huntingdale Crescent in Connolly near Joondalup and because they were earning good money in Karratha, they were able to pay cash for it. Shortly after that in April 1988, they left Karratha and moved to Cairns in North Queensland. They rented a duplex unit in Gordonvale just outside Cairns and he started to work for a local sign writer Expressways Signs.

As before I often had the help of Bob, my regular labourer from Forrestfield, and at times Terry was able to put in some time with the pouring of a concrete slab. By now it was about October 1987 and it was getting warmer to work. I made a point not to work on site on Sundays any more as I felt that I had to give some time to my family at home, although when I sold a block in Leiden Place with a house as a subject sale attached to it, I would have that house open for inspection on the Sunday afternoon. As I mentioned before, I would not accept a conjunction from any other agents on any of my blocks, but I was happy to conjunct with other agents on a house that was a subject sale on any of my blocks. After all I wanted to settle the sale of my block as that meant more money coming in which would be useful in my building operations.

I was soon ready to start pitching the first roof on the villa at the back of the development and again I started with the ceiling joists on my own and then Terry came over and the two of us finished the roof together. It was great really to work like that with my oldest son and sometimes I wondered what would have happened if back in the early seventies John Tonkin had not come in with his labor government and my building company of those days was still around. Very likely Terry would be working in the business somewhere as a foreman because by this time he proved to be a good and capable tradesman and he would go a long way.

Talking about Dawson Village, I had made arrangements with all the tenants that they would pay their monthly rent into my BankWest Account in the Forrestfield Forum shopping center every time no later that the last day of the month with their name to be mentioned on the bank statement. Also with the bank I arranged the closing date of my statement not to be at the end of the month but three days later being the 3rd day of the following month. The reason for doing this was that if any of them were a day or so late in paying, it would still show on my statement and I would not have to chase them. However if their name was not on it by the third day I was over there like a shot to ask: “Where is the money”?

You have to be on the ball because you hear so often on TV that tenants get away with not paying rents for months and in most cases it is the agents that are supposed to look after the collection of rent and they are not doing their job. Because of the way that things were working out in Dawson Village, I was looking forward to having the second village up and running, but before I could do anything about that, I had to finish building those seven villas in Palmyra. Because of the R30 zoning in Palmyra space was at a premium, so in the layout we had a driveway in the middle straight from the road up front with short drives into each individual garage and all the storm water was drained into three big soak wells in the middle of the main drive. As the soil was good and sandy it would soak up the water comfortably and as time went it certainly did so.

Driving around I had noticed many developments with a number of villas and they all had the same colour of tiles on their roofs. I wanted to create some individual appearance in my development so I selected different colours for the roofs for each of the villas and when all the roofs were on it was very noticeable. It created an individual feeling about the place and I was glad that I had done that and I decided that in any further developments I would follow the same principle.

With the back two villas for Margaret Keogh fully finished and the brick paved drives fully completed, with Margaret’s permission I had a couple of home open weekends before handing them over to Margaret as per our agreement. Out of that I got some good contacts for the other five that were mine to sell and when the last ones were complete and the inspection by the Melville City Council inspector was passed we were able to apply for the individual strata tittles. I had home opens every weekend until they were all sold which did not take long at all because the location was ideal and the villas were in great demand in this area. I was happy to conclude that the whole project was very successful and I might also add, very rewarding money wise.

It was time for me to go back to Forrestfield and get cracking on Margaret Village. Since doing business with Domenic and Maria Giovanazzi we became friends and I often called in and had a coffee with them. Their cups of coffee were different to the ones I had at home. Theirs were small and very strong and I could only drink them with plenty of sugar but so what, it was great to meet up with them at times and we had a lot of fun. Just behind their house they had a specially constructed pizza oven in which they often baked their pizzas and I remember that Terry was also invited with me one Saturday afternoon to try them out. Then I thought that it would be nice to invite them out for dinner in Perth one evening and I chose to take them to the revolving Restaurant HILITE 33 at St. Martins Tower, 44 St Georges Terrace. They were both very happy to accept my invitation so we drove to Forrestfield to pick them up and then went in to the city, parked the car and took the lift up to the revolving restaurant.

If you have never been there before, it would be well worth the experience and for Domenic and Maria it certainly was that. After a few drinks it was time to select from the menu. The selection of the entre by Domenic was comical as he went for the French snails (Escargots). He explained that if these would taste all right, he had plenty in his yard at home amongst all of his fruit pot plants. It became a real laughing affair. We had an enjoyable evening as we saw the city sky line slowly moving around all night. I am sure that they had plenty to talk to their kids about the wonderful evening we all had.

The land area for the Margaret Village project was just over 5300 sq metres which on a R25 zoning, allowed me to build a total of 13 units. The good thing about this zoning was, there was more land to work with and so I could have all separate units without having to build some together as duplexes like I had to do in Dawson Village. Also like Dawson Village these were going to be rented out and the rental market looked good with no vacancies at all in Dawson Village and there being such a demand for three bedroom units I just could not go wrong. So by the beginning of March 1988 I made a start with the help of Bob, my regular labourer, and we were soon putting concrete slabs down with bricklayers following quickly making it look like the usual beehive of activity. The same father and son team that put the roofs on at Dawson Village, Jim and Warren Osboine, were only too happy to put these roofs on. To them it was a lot of work very close to home as they were living in the street just behind Margaret Village. I had the same line of thinking about using different colour roof tiles like I did at the seven villas project in Palmyra in order to create the feeling of individuality when you enter the village. By the time that all the concrete slabs were down, the first unit was ready for me to do the fixing out meaning the doors and skirting and shelving and getting ready

for the painter. As I could see that I would have some spare time on my hands, I opted for the painter to do all the inside while I did the fascia and gutters and the eaves on the outside. The painter was again the same fellow that did Dawson Village, Jim Olson and he lived not far away in High Wycombe.

All the storm water from the whole of the village had to be piped away as the soil was a mixture of clay and gravel and it does not absorb the water very well. As I have explained before when I was putting in the main sewer extension, the land fell from the east towards Hartfield Road so it made it easier to lay the 90 mm storm water drain pipes from every downpipe to the concrete bubble up pit that I had installed just outside the edge of the concrete curb at the top end of the roundabout of the cul-de-sac. The pit was a 600 mm round concrete liner with a concrete floor poured in the bottom of it. The concrete curbing was cut away and a concrete spout formed from the outlet of the pit straight onto the bitumen road surface. The principle was that the water coming into this pit from the downpipes through a network of drain pipes would fill this pit and flow over onto the road and as the road was falling gradually to the rainwater sumps near Hartfield Road, the rain water would finish up in the main storm water line. Later on when this project was finished it proved to be working well.

Towards the end of the construction time Bob and I put in all of the dividing Hardy asbestos fences between all the units and then the last thing, every unit got a clothes washing line installed in their small back yard. I keep on calling it asbestos fences although there has not been asbestos in it for many years any more. In Dawson village I had contracted a garden firm to put in the reticulation and plants, but I decided to do this myself here in Margaret Village as I considered that I could do it quite a bit cheaper myself with the help of Riet who did not mind helping me with it. We picked up a full trailer load of all sorts of plants from a wholesale nursery in Wanneroo and we were surprised at the economy of it and this way I saved myself a bundle by doing the gardening ourselves.

It was with the greatest of pleasure that I attached the name of MARGARET VILLAGE above the letterboxes at the front of the complex with the knowledge that I finally did my naming. It did not take long at all to fill all the units with tenants and as it turned out one of the tenants was the daughter of the roof carpenter, Jim Osboine, who put on all the roofs for me.

While I was working flat out in the village, outside of it in Leiden Place there was some activity as well. On some of the blocks that I had sold during the year, builders were building houses which was good to see. As a result of my initiative to pursue the development of this land, there were now people building their homes in a new and I might say exclusive area because all the

surrounding streets were more older style houses. One slightly larger block was bought by Keith Waterworth, the guy that I engaged with his real estate license at the start of my Roy Weston Franchise office in Forrestfield and who later on bought the office from me. His new double storey house was being built now and was nearing completion and that also was adding to the value of this new area. By this time I now had 26 rental units fully occupied which provided me with a healthy return for my investment and a good income to live on for my family and I just felt good but you know me I just did not feel right to just sit back and "rest on my laurels" as the saying goes. I still had some more blocks to sell and also a couple of subject sale houses to sell but I needed more than that to keep me busy. By this time we were nearing the end of 1988.

I must make mention of our son Dean at this stage. He was serving his apprenticeship with a company that owned a number of hotels and resorts around W.A. One of them was the Rose and Crown in Guildford where he worked some time and then he was sent over to work at Karry Valley near Pemberton in the South West. After he got settled into his job at Karry Valley, we as a family decided to spend a weekend there with him and tour the wine district around Margaret River. We were doing some wine tasting at the Red Gate wineries when something happened inside the bar area. Jeff had the nasty habit to produce one of those noiseless farts and when we were there standing on front of this bar, Jeff produced one of his specials and then quietly walked out. Besides us there were other people there as well and then all of a sudden the smell was very noticeable and the guy behind the bar said, as he was poking his nose in the air: "Somebody has got a fermenting problem"! It was all very embarrassing but that was our Jeff for you.

One evening Dean phoned us, a couple of days before his Mum's birthday, saying that he was planning to come home for her birthday and he wanted to find out if it was OK to bring a friend. Mum jokingly asked: "What a boy friend or a girl friend"? And Dean's answer was: "No it is a girlfriend and she is from Zimbabwe". Mum's question was: "Is she black"? Dean was quiet for a few seconds and then he said: "Does it matter"? And then Mum, after a few seconds said:" Yes it does matter" with Dean replying: "No Mum she is not". Thinking about it later on it was quite funny how this phone conversation went but from Mum's point of view it was a fair reaction.

When Dean turned up for Mum's birthday with his girlfriend Tammy Hardy, we were both delighted with his choice. They met at Karry Valley where she was working as a waitress. She was on a working holiday around Australia and compared with Dean she was a lot smaller in size but she proved to be good company. Three month before he finished his apprenticeship, he was sent over to South Hedland, up North, to take charge of the kitchen of the

hotel there and the first thing that he did was clean out the whole kitchen and the fridge area because it was so filthy.

He must have made a good impression in Karry Valley, while still being an apprentice, to be sent up north to be in charge of a kitchen. When he finished his time and then became a full tradesman he left and so did Tammy and the both of them went to the Gold Coast and started to work there at the Jupiter Casino.

CHAPTER 16

PURSUING FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES

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About a month before Margret Village was finished I started to look around in Forrestfield for more development opportunities. Just by chance in the West Australian tender column, I noticed that the owners of the drive-in picture theater in Forrestfield were calling for tenders to purchase all the land of the theater and adjoining land that they also owned. The land was between Hale Road, across Woodlupine Brook, right up to Magnolia Way on the other side and on the west from the end of Marlock Court up to the grounds of the Forrestfield Forum. It was an enormous piece of land that would call for a lot of progressive development if I could get hold of it and the more that I studied the possibilities, the more that I wanted it. I had a talk to my Bank Manager at BankWest in Maddington and he was sure that his bank would support me now that I had so many assets in the form of my units.

After a lot of thinking and planning of various layouts I came up with a number of house blocks, which would give me a quick return of cash, and six unit sites on a R25 zoning which the Kalamunda Shire would support me as they had done before. The plan was for building the first unit village for sale in order to get the cash return to pay back part of the borrowed money and then to repeat the same on the second one.

From there on it was my plan to build rental villages similar to Margaret Village. It all looked very exciting and I could not wait for the tender closing date to be there. It was important to me that my tender figure was the highest and I expected that the highest bidder might be to the amount of one million dollars so I decided that I would increase mine with an extra fifty thousand dollars, making my tender amount $ 1,050,000. With the tender documents I had to include a 10% deposit and the balance was to be paid in 30 days time on settlement.

I must admit that I was a bit nervous when I was present in Perth at the office of the solicitors who were representing the owners. There was only one person in the room that I recognized amongst the people like me, who had put in a bid for this land, and that was the real estate agent, John Mair, from way back in the sixties when I was doing business with him. There were about ten envelopes handed in at the desk of the presiding solicitor in their boardroom with all the prospective buyers present.

I will never forget how things went. Mine was the second envelope that was opened with my tender amount of $1,050,000 announced. All the next ones opened, were below mine with the closest one just over the $1,000,000 and then the last envelope of John Mair was opened and he got the highest tender amount of $1,500,000. I was disappointed like hell and I thought that he must have really wanted it for a good reason in order to come up with a figure far above the market value as I had had the land valued by a sworn valuer at the bank manager's insistence. I tried to convince myself afterwards, that there had to be a reason for me not to get this land although it took a while to accept the fact that I had missed out on it. Maybe I had built up my hopes too much.

When I got home and told Riet how it went, I could see in her reaction that she was relieved. I think that the aspect of borrowing all that money was in her eyes too risky. After all she had been through a bankruptcy before and that was still pretty raw for her. A few days later I happened to be at the Kalamunda Shire office talking to Steve Tan, the town planning officer, whom I had become friendly with over the last few years. He told me that John Mair had become the owner of the Forrestfield Forum shopping center one year earlier and he was keen to buy a piece of land adjoining the shopping center grounds for additional parking that he had to have when he was going to extend the shopping center in the near future. This piece of land that he so badly needed belonged to the Kalamunda Shire and the Shire was not interested in selling it to him. However the Shire was keen to get their hands on some land along Hale Road and a part of the land that John Mair had just bought, was what the Shire wanted. Apparently before the tenders closed for the Forrestfield drive-in theater land, John Mair and the Shire had worked out that if John Mair finished up being the successful tenderer for this land, the Shire was happy to swap the land that the Shire owned, and what John Mair so desperately wanted, for a piece of the land along Hale Road out of the land that John Mair had bought. Along Hale Road the Shire wanted to build a community center. So John Mair had to get this land from the drive-in owners at any cost for the sake of his expansion plans for the shopping center and that is why his tender figure was just over the top.

After all this disappointing experience something exciting happened. We became grandparents on the 29th of January 1989 when Terry and Jeannette's first son was born and they called him Brody Michael.

What now? I felt that I needed a break after all the tension that I had been through and I became interested in getting away with Riet as we both could do with going somewhere. After asking around at a travel agent, they suggested a cruise to Asia and as it happened there was one available on the Arcadia leaving in just two weeks time from Fremantle. It was straight after that Brody was born that we boarded the cruise ship and sailed to Asia calling in at Bali and then through to Singapore

where the ship moored alongside the terminal and when we were on the top deck looking around we were surprised to see that a cable car was crossing overhead from Santosa Island which was a real tourist attraction as we were to find out the next day when we paid a visit to this island. We spent all day there as there was so much to explore and then in the early evening they put on a most spectacular laser show in an open air theater that was attended by a large crowd of all nationalities. After that we went back to our ship by means of the cable car from Santosa Island and it was fantastic to slowly move high up in the air across the top of the Arcadia looking down on the ship.

It was a very interesting day and hard to forget. From there we travelled to Vietnam and were amazed at the amount of people traveling on little scooters and all sorts of bikes, which were very often loaded high with all sorts of



Looking down from the cable car on the cruise ship: Arcadia.

goods. There was a lot of poverty which was evident by the slum dwellings they were living in. We also went on a guided tour to an old temple inland which involved a fair amount of walking and you could see that there was a lot of history there The Arcadia sailed from there on to Hong Kong where we spent two nights, doing some interesting sight seeing during the day. This city was enormous with a lot of tall buildings and that alone was an eye opener. I must also mention that while being on board sailing from one place to the next spending time on the ocean there was a lot of entertaining in the evenings in their on board theater in the form of variety shows and film evenings. During the day there were game shows and bingo and musicals for all to enjoy. In other words there was plenty to keep you interested. Our cruise ended in Hong Kong twenty days after leaving Fremantle and we flew back to Perth fully relaxed and happy to have done this cruise as this was long overdue.

While we were away Terry had been looking after all my rentals and collecting the rents where needed and I was pleased that he done this for me. I got over the disappointment of missing out on this land deal and I started to look around again for opportunities. I thought that it might be worth my while to call in at my friends at the Kalamunda Shire and see if they might be aware of anything that was worth pursuing. They said that the chicken farm along Sultana Road could come up for sale. If and when that did happen the new owner would not get a license to carry on with farming chickens as the smell and health hazard so close to Forrestfield was becoming a problem and although the Shire at this stage would not revoke their permit they would like to see it close down.

With this knowledge in the back of my mind I called in at the chicken farm and as the owners were living in an old house on the farm, I had a good chance to have a look around. I realized that the smell that was hanging around would be hard to get rid off unless you completely removed the top layer of soil and carted it away as the chicken droppings had penetrated into the soil. When I had a talk to the owners and made them aware of what the Shire's feelings were, they felt reluctant to discuss much with me and all that I could get out of them was that they would think it over and let me know. When a week later I had heard nothing I called in again and was told that they were not ready to do anything at this stage and would continue to keep on farming their chickens. In hindsight I thought that maybe it was not such a good idea anyway because if I had ended up buying it and started to develop it by pouring a lot of money into it and because of its location it would not be a success, then I would be lumbered with it and that would be very risky so just as well that it went that way.

Then along Berkshire Road near where the overhead power lines crossed the road, I noticed a For Sale sign that I had not seen there before so it must have only just been put up. It was a Colin Heath Real Estate sign and it immediately got me interested so I phoned up and got all the details including the plan of the total land area and the asking price. With that information I went back to the Kalamunda Shire planning division and talked to Steve Tan and had a look at the location plan for that area. He pointed out that alongside of the large parcel of land that Colin Heath had for sale, there was a fairly small strip of land that was useless on its own to do anything with because it was only about 8 metres wide and could not be developed on its own. He then made me aware that it could only be used if it was joined to and amalgamated with the adjoining large parcel of land. To me that did not seem a problem, but Steve Tan made it clear to me that the Shire would only support a development plan if both pieces of land were owned together so that they could be amalgamated.

I thought a bit about all this and then I contacted Colin Heath and went to their office and put in an offer at 85% of the asking price with a condition attached to the offer that I was able to buy the small piece of land adjoining their big one. That price was accepted and I was surprised but was more that happy that they did. When I got the name of the owner of the small bit of land from the rates department of the Shire, I phoned and went to see him in Melville where he was living. He explained to me that Colin Heath had approached him before and as the price that they had offered was in his opinion far too small, he was not prepared to sell at their price. I then asked him what price was he prepared to sell his land for and I could not believe what this man was asking and he then said that he was in no hurry to sell and was quite prepared to sit on the fence and wait until he could get what he wanted. I did not expect that this was going to happen. I had already drawn up a development plan incorporating both parcels of land with housing blocks and a number of unit sites but I could do nothing unless this man was prepared to come to his senses.

Another thing that I had to work out was that the main overhead power lines were partly over the land and a strip of land underneath would have to be reserved as an easement to the State Electricity Commission as a condition of approval by the Shire. This I could cope with but I could not cope with the fact that the owner of the small piece of land had all the time in the world as I did not have that. So I had no option but to scrap this proposed development. I can now also understand why Colin Heath was so eager to accept my much lower offer as they, as land developers themselves, could not get anywhere with the owner of the small piece of land either.

What now? Because I had been a real estate agent with Roy Weston in Forrestfield, I got to know the area very well. As I was driving around looking again for possibilities and because I did dealings with the hardware shop in Holmes Road, I noticed a very old and run down house on the corner of Holmes Road and Coburg Street. I was just a bit curious because there seemed to be a bit of land around it so as usual I made another trip up the hill to Kalamunda to see my friend at the Shire to make enquiries about this location in Holmes Road.

I soon found out that the land, where the house was standing, was three acres in size and stretched right up to Cambridge Road, which was a cul-de-sac running parallel with Sussex Road which runs into Coburg Street. I was also informed by the Shire that they would support a R25 re-zoning application and last but not least I got the name of the owner, who was a bookmaker at the races. His name was Manuel Kalaf and he lived in Burke Drive, Attadale. With the block plan of the land that I got from the Shire, I had some planning to do.

Three acres of land amounts to 12,000 sq metres and on the basis of R25 I could build 30 villas. Now my plan was that I would build these only for sale and by doing them in one village I had to build all of them before I could apply for the strata titles for settlement, even if I was able to pre-sell most of them beforehand. That also meant that I had to finance the cost of building all of them myself until settlement time. It would take a lot more time to build the lot as well which would also add to the cost and did not look so appealing to me, profit wise. So I thought that it would be better if I did the whole thing in stages and to do that I needed to subdivide the three acres into three blocks each one acre in size and build one village of 10 villas to begin with and sell them and proceed with the second village making use of the profits of the first one.

It seemed a good plan and one that I was happy with. The next thing was to acquire the land. As I was walking over the land and getting a feel of the area I noticed that the neighbours also used the land as their local rubbish tip. I spoke to one of the local agents from Granger Clark who had just moved into their new office along Holmes Road almost opposite the hardware shop and he told me that the owner had been approached before by their office and they were told that he was not interested in selling at all.

I knew that Lyn Travers was still actively working with Roy Weston so I thought I might ask her if she knew anything more about the owner and his feelings about selling. When I got talking to her she also confirmed that the owner was not interested in selling at all.

Then it occurred to me that maybe the owner might be interested in getting a number of villas in return like I had done with Margaret Keogh in

Palmyra. But before I made the call to him, I spent a bit more time with the building and planning department of the Kalamunda Shire in order to find out what would be involved if I made an arrangement with the land owner in acquiring the land and then went ahead with subdividing and rezoning to R25. I was glad that I did this because I found out that when you do a subdivision, you have to donate 10% of the land area to the Crown Land department, to be designated as public open space and this was to be administered by the Shire. If the 10% of land was too small to be turned into public open space, the alternative would be to pay 10% of the sworn valuation of the land to the Shire and in this case that was what was going to happen.

Also in order to be able to dispose of all the storm water from the villas and driveway area, as condition of approval, I had to provide a 9 inch concrete drain pipe with two concrete storm water pits in each of the three villages and this drain line was to flow into the small lake that was located in the reserve on the other side of Cambridge Road. With this additional knowledge I was able to do my sums and then I made my telephone call to Mr. Manuel Kalaf, the owner of the land who was, as I mentioned before, living in Attadale.

When I introduced myself and mentioned that I was calling to make an appointment to come and see him, he said that he was not selling the land and then I informed him that I was not interested in buying his land but I wanted to talk to him about it. Somehow I must have made him curious enough to be happy to invite me to his home in Attadale on the next evening. I had already found out that the old house on his land was at times occupied by some blokes that had drunken parties there and it was always a mess with heaps of empty bottles and boxes of garbage around the place. I doubted if he was getting any rent at all at times as it was just not very attractive for anyone wanting to live there.

When I saw him the next evening I brought with me the plans and layout of the seven villa development in Palmyra that I had done for Margaret Keogh and I was pleased to see that he liked what I had done for her. I then explained that I was thinking of offering a number of villas, similar to the ones I had built in Palmyra, in return for the land and I informed him that I would have some very expensive items associated with this project that I had to cover. I pointed out the lump sum of money that I had to pay to the Shire and the costly storm water disposal drain that I had to provide all along to the lake in the reserve on the other side of Cambridge Road. I explained to him that I was planning to divide the three acres into three blocks of one acre each with ten villas on each of these blocks.

With all this in mind, the best I could offer him was five villas out of the first village. He was very impressed as he could see that five lots of rent from

brand new villas was a very good improvement from the old shack of a home that he had now. As I had expected he said that he wanted to think it over and he would get back to me within one week. I was happy about the fact that at least he had shown that he was interested, which to me looked promising and I now had to be patient for him to come back to me.

I knew that he was a bookmaker and that meant that he was always fully occupied during the weekends at the races so I could see that he did need some time to go over my proposition. When I did not hear from him after ten days I thought that it was time for me to phone him and sound him out. When he answered my call he said that he was not happy with five villas and that he wanted six. I was not taken by surprise as I had realized already that he was a shrewd businessman and would try to get as much as he could get out of this deal and so would I. I said that I would get back to him after working on my figures and left it at that.

I had to put on my thinking cap as I could see that this guy was out to squeeze out of me what he could and there was a limit to where I was prepared to go. Six villas out of the first ten villas only left me with four for myself and that meant that I would have to put a fair amount of money into building the first ten villas. The sales figure of the four villas would not by any means cover the cost to build the first ten plus the cost of the subdivision to the Shire and the drainage line that I had to put in before doing anything else. The only way that I could rectify that problem was to offer him six villas out of the second village and that would be the one coming from Cambridge Road as the first village would be at the corner of Sussex road and Coburg Street. In my opinion, that was the only way that I could let him have the six villas that he demanded, in return for the land.

Using my business letterhead of Oorschot Realty, I set out precisely what I was prepared to offer him for his land as I had described above and made provisions at the bottom of the letter for both parties to sign in full agreement. On the letter I made reference to the villas in Palmyra as to the size and quality of the new villas in Cambridge Road. With this all prepared and a set of drawings of the Palmyra project I went to see him again in Attadale and after explaining to him that this way was the only way that I could afford to let him have the six villas that he wanted, he was happy with what I was able to offer him but with one condition that he wanted the agreement between us drawn up by his solicitor additional to his signing this letterhead agreement.

I was happy to go along with this as long as the official deed by the solicitor covered exactly the same as what was in the letter. With that and after signing the letter by the both of us, we had a drink on it and toasted to a good outcome of our arrangement and we parted pleased with the outcome.



Coburg Village at the corner of Sussex Road and Coburg Street Forrestfield.

I knew that I had done a good business deal and that at the end it would be very rewarding for me financially. When a few weeks later I was presented with the official deed from his solicitor I now understood why Manuel Kalaf felt that this deed was necessary. He covered things like what would happen if I died while carrying out the works or if I went broke in the meantime and on the other side that for the subdivision to be approved the land had to be in my company's name.

I went up the hill to Lewis Road in Forrestfield to see my friend the architectural designer Russell Jones who had done the other designs of all the units and villages that I had built so far. I discussed with him what I had bought sort of, and wanted him to design along the same lines as in Palmyra, ten villas on each of the three one acre blocks being the one at the start of Holmes Road, one at the end of Sussex Road and one at the end of Cambridge Road. I showed him on the plan where I had to construct the storm water main drain line so in his design he had to stay clear of that area and again I was keen to get the polished jarrah finish to the kitchen cupboards as that really did put some class into the finish. I needed the land cleared of all the rubbish but before that I got the demolishing contractors, who I had used before, to get rid of the old house for me.

When I was on site with this fellow to discuss matters about the old house and stipulated that I wanted the old water supply kept intact as I needed water

to be available. I saw Lyn Travers driving by slowly. She was obviously curious about what was happening. When she saw me she came out of her car and asked how I managed to buy the land as nobody had been able to persuade the owner to sell before and then I told her what sort of a deal that I was able to arrange with him and she could not believe it.

She was a great lady and very business like and when I told her, that I was planning to sell them as I was building them, she did not waste any time at all to ask if she could have an automatic conjunction on all of them. Like my blocks in Leiden Place before, I said that I would not do that as I was planning to sell them myself on my own but if anyone of them was sold with a subject sale attached to the offer, then I certainly would conjunct on the subject sale property. She was happy about that and we parted as usual on a friendly note.

When the old house was gone I got David Breeze back with his large frontend loader to clear the whole of the land and cart it all away to the tip clearing away all the trees that were scattered around as well.

Next I got the surveyor, Bill Scanlon, who I had used before, to mark all the boundary pegs including the ones for the proposed subdivision as per the plan that was prepared in the meantime by Ray Belton, the town planner that had done this sort of work before for me. As the storm water main drain line had to be in position as part of the subdivision approval, that was the first thing that I had on my mind to do. Also a letter came from the Shire to advise me that, at my cost, I had to organize a sworn valuation of this three acre block of land and they stipulated a certain valuer who normally did all their valuations within the Shire and in the letter they mentioned that paying the 10% of the sworn value had to be paid as part of the condition of approval.

Two weeks later I received a copy of the valuation which was initially addressed to the Shire and with this valuation it was explained that the value was based on what I was planning to do with the land instead of what the land was worth as it was now. The valuation was $500,000 so I had to pay $50,000 to the Shire as “cash in lieu” as it was called.

At the end of May I made a start with installing the main storm water line just inside the western boundary of the three acre block. It soon became very clear that the ground was a lot harder than I had anticipated and David Breeze was having a hard time opening up the trench with his backhoe and getting to the required depth as he was moving along from the Holmes Road end towards the Cambridge Road. Also as he went along he had to go deeper in order to create the fall that was required to make the water flow through towards the lake in the reserve at the end of the line.

As I had done before when I put in the main sewer extension of Hartfield Road, in the bottom of the trench I put down a layer of sand that I then



Cambridge Village at the end of Cambridge Road Forrestfield.

compacted and screeded, in order to get the gradual fall that I had calculated to place the 9 inch concrete pipes on. As these concrete pipes were a lot heavier than the 9 inch plastic sewer pipes, we used a sling attached to the backhoe bucket to lower the pipe into position. These pipes were also joined together with a rubber ring to seal the joints. When we got towards Cambridge Road we were getting close to 2 metres in the ground and the backhoe could not get into the ground any more.

We had no option but to get an additional heavy duty backhoe with a jack hammer attachment to try and loosen the rocky ground before David's backhoe could dig it out. I tell you it was a hard job and I was glad that I had my regular labourer Bob with me all the time to help me. As we went along we fitted the concrete liners at the various locations and when all six of them were in place we got a concrete truck to deliver premixed concrete to put in the bottom of them. I was glad that it was done by the end of June after back filling and compacting the filling over the drain line.

Most of the boundary fences were in a reasonable state so I did not think I needed to do anything about that. It was now a matter of waiting for the subdivision approval to come through. I had already lodged the building plans and specifications to the Shire of Kalamunda so that I did not have to wait to long before I could start to build as I was itching to get going again. Another thing that I was happy about was that within one week I was able to sell the last



Hema Court on the corner of Holmes Road and Coburg Street.

three blocks in Leiden Place. That brought in some cash that would come in handy for the building that was now starting in Coburg Village after I finally got the building permit from the Kalamunda Shire and we were on our way.

I still had the standard For Sale signs, which we had used in the Roy Weston shop, and I got acrylic sheets with Oorschot Realty printed on it that I could glue on the existing signs and I put one up on the job.

From the start I was getting enquiries and before I had poured the first floor slab, I had pre-sold the first villa off the plan. Like before, I was putting in long days, first one to be on the job and last one to leave at night but there was non stop activity and soon all my regular subcontractors like the Italian bricklayers Sam and his brother, Frank Mattaboni the electrician, Collin Evans the plasterer, Koos van de Kooy the plumber and Jim Osboine and his son Warren to do the roofs, were on site like regular clockwork.

As usual I had an electric power pole at the front with a meter box and four power points on the board for every one to use. In order to save money I had delivered on site stock lengths of, 8 metres long, steel beams to be used in the roof construction by the roofing carpenters and with my 9 inch steel angle grinder I used to cut them into the required length and that way it worked out a lot cheaper.

As I mentioned before there was a lot of interest in these villas and even within my own family. Our son Tim, who had finished his apprenticeship in Mandurah at the Atrium, and had been in Queensland for a while, was now

working at the Burswood in Victoria Park as a chef and was living back home again. I think that living away from home made him keener to live on his own instead of living back home and I think that this was why he asked about buying a villa at Coburg Village when it would be finished.

He had already made enquiries about getting a mortgage, which was no problem and when he said that he wanted to put in an offer for villa number 1 in Coburg Village, I offered him a $2,000 discount off the full purchase price. Within the family the snowballing effect started to happen. When our son Paul found out that Tim was going to buy number 1, he approached me saying that he was thinking the same way and selected villa number 3 as his choice because it was sort off tucked away in the corner and it would give him a bit of privacy. You see he had just got this girl friend and they were planning on moving in together so he put in an offer with the same reduction of $2,000 as I gave to Tim.

Word must have been spreading as just out of the blue, Riet's brother Tony Clynk, who also did my taxation work, showed interest in buying one as an investment and he selected villa number 6 as his choice. Work was progressing well and then towards the time that all the brick paved drives were completed and the front screen brick walls were in place with the letterboxes and the name of Coburg Village displayed over the letterboxes, I was ready to apply for the strata tittles in readiness for settlement of the seven villas that were pre-sold.

It all went very much better than I had expected with all the interest that these villas were getting from the public and of course there was one visitor that came around at a regular basis and that was the original owner of the land, Manuel Kalaf, the man from Attadale.

He was more than impressed with what he saw and he indicated then, from the plan that I showed him about the village at the end of Cambridge Road, which was going to be called Cambridge Village, what the lay out was going to be. He liked what he saw and asked me if he could there and then select which villas were going to be his six. He studied the plan for a while and then stated that he would claim ownership of the villas 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. That was OK with me and I told him that I would confirm his selection in writing and asked him to also in writing confirm this decision of his choice. I would need this paperwork upon completion of Cambridge Village in due course to organize the ownership of the villas on the strata tittles.

After the completion of Coburg Village, which was by the end of January 1990, I was ready to start on the next village as soon as the building permit became available from the Kalamunda Shire for Cambridge Village. With seven villas now occupied in Coburg Village, I had home opens every Satur-

day and Sunday for the other three unsold ones. As I have said so often before, you do get results from home opens, despite the fact that the interest rates on mortgages were steadily rising which did put a damper on sales as the real estate agents in the area were already experiencing. But for those people that were down-grading from a four bedrooms and two bathrooms home to something smaller, my villas were just the answer and the proof was there as the last three villas sold within the next month. The bank manager was more than happy as he could see from my monthly statements that the large amount of money that I had borrowed for this project was being greatly reduced.

By this time I had the building permit and I was already digging the footings for the first two villas in Cambridge Village. What I found out in doing so was that the ground in this village was a lot harder and as I was doing the digging myself with the help of Bob, my labourer, it became an exercise with the use of the pick and the mattock and a lot of sweat.

As before, I put up a For Sale sign like at Coburg Village and we got some enquiries as we were getting brick work up and some roofs on. Needless to say that the same regular subcontractors from before obliged to be part of my building activity on this one again and I think that my method of paying to a strict system of measuring the progress from Thursday till the following Wednesday as a basis for paying them two days later on Friday afternoon, was greatly accepted, often by having a carton of beer on site at the end of the Friday as well.

I was expecting that from the enquiries that I was getting, that some sales would have come through like it had done with Coburg Village but I think that the rise in interest rates might have put people off a bit and they were reluctant to commit themselves at this stage. I had learned to be a patient man and I just kept on working doing everything like digging and putting in the storm water pipes from the downpipes to the two concrete well liners at the main drain line, digging in the fences between the villas and of course all the internal fixing in each and every villa. I was anxious to get them all finished so that I could apply for the strata tittles and hand over the six villas to the original land owner, Manuel Kalaf, as per our arrangement when I had acquired the land earlier on.

When Kevin and Jane came back to Perth in January 1990 and were in the process of designing their home in Connolly, I promised to take time off to spend time with them to build their home and that is what I did when Cambridge Village was finished. I started to travel to Connolly and made a start on their home which was a difficult construction because the block was sloping down about three metres towards the back. Because of that, the

design called for a double storey at the back with some cavity brick walls with reinforced concrete filling to act as retaining walls.

During the first month I spent the Sundays having home opens in Cambridge Village in order to sell my own four villas but there was very little interest and the high interest rates (around 17%) that were being charged by the banks made it hard to make any sales. So I changed my plans and had floor coverings and vertical blinds put in and added them to my rent portfolio. I soon had good tenants in them and that was much better than having them empty.

I often stayed with Kevin and Jane overnight so that I could make early starts and work late at night instead of driving home to Thornlie. During all this activity I thought that Riet and I were entitled to another holiday and we had ourselves booked on the QE2 for a cruise through Asia all the way as far as Japan just before Christmas. I figured that by that time the roof would be on at Kevin and Jane's house and while the other trades could do their part, we would be away enjoying our well earned trip. By early November the whole of the brickwork was finished and as the saying goes we were plate high, ready to start the roof. The plan was that I would be working on my own during the day on the roof doing the ceiling joists and cutting out the roof and then Kevin would join me before and after his work which was nearby. Now you can plan as much as you like but it does not always work out like that.

On this particular day I was on top of the ceiling joists using my nail gun when somehow I fell down through the joists and landed on my backside on the concrete floor below, near the start of the concrete stairs leading to the basement area. Right alongside where I landed, there was a 44 gallon drum that I had only just missed by less than a foot. I felt quite sore and after taking off my tool belt, I managed to struggle down into the basement, where I sat down in the folding chair that I had standing there. That was where I normally had my lunch and I thought I will have a cuppa and then I will be OK to get back on top again.

While sitting there I started to realize how lucky I had been by just missing that bloody drum. If I had landed on it I most certainly would have broken my back if not worse. After my cuppa I tried to get up but I just could not move at all so I just stayed in the chair and waited for Kevin to turn up, and he did. He called out as there was no noise and found me down stairs. I told him what had happened and he tried to get me to stand up and realized that it was hopeless so he called for an ambulance to take me to the Joondalup Hospital.

This was the first time in my life that I had been in an ambulance and I tell you that I was disappointed because I expected to have at least one female nurse attending to me and when travelling the sirens were not going either. At

the hospital they checked me over and found that nothing was broken and an X-ray did not reveal any fractures, they said. Kevin had phoned Riet and she came to the hospital worried about me and at about nine o'clock in the evening with a bit of trouble they were able to get me into the front of Riet's car. When we got back to Thornlie I had a lot of trouble to get out of the car and into bed. The instruction, when leaving the hospital, was to go and see my local GP and that is what I did the next morning.

He ordered me to go to the Gosnells Clinic for new X-rays and to come back with them to the surgery. Upon inspecting them he concluded that I had a fractured pelvis and two broken ribs and with that he ordered me to have six weeks of total rest. That was a setback for Kevin's roof. I just hoped that I would be OK to go on our planned cruise on the QE2 just before Christmas.

The next day Kevin brought my car back to Thornlie and he was happy that I got off the way that I did. Two weeks later I felt good enough to go back to Kevin's place and continue on the roof. I still was sore a lot but I could walk around and Terry had offered to spend some time with Kevin on the roof while I stayed on the ground cutting timber and handing stuff up to them. Kevin took some time off from his work so that the roof could get completed. It all worked out all right despite the delay and the roof got covered before we went on our cruise.

It was great to be able to take it easy on the QE2 when we left from Fremantle. We called in at Bali where we had to be transferred to shore by the tenders of the cruise ship because there were no harbor facilities there. Bali was fascinating with the wood carving that they showed us and we were treated to a luncheon with local dancing performers in their traditional costumes. Our next call was at Kota Kinabalu at the top end of the Island of Borneo.

The minute that we got there it was clear that timber was their main industry as there were large stacks of timber everywhere ready to be loaded and shipped to other countries and a lot of it would have been shipped to Australia. From there to Hong Kong where we had been before and it still was a very busy city with interesting places to see inland on any of the guided coach tours. Further up the coast a call into Shanghai was an eye opener to what China was all about. It was so crowded that you asked yourself: "How can they exist here with so many people all trying to make a living"? It would not be my choice of a city to live but we did see some white people amongst them.

When we landed in Japan, we stayed there in the harbor of Kyoto for three days so there was time to see some of the countryside. There was a lovely typical Japanese garden setting containing small temple structures with their high pointed red roofs all around and many small lakes and the famous red

blossom trees everywhere. We were even allowed inside one of these temples after taking off our shoes and putting on slippers that they provided. The next day a lot of us went on the bullet train all the way to Tokyo. That was quite an experience. First the railway station, so different to what we are used to. When the train glides into its place along the platform, all the door openings slide open at just the correct location where the people are already waiting in line to step into the train. This system is much regimented and it works like clockwork. I tell you it was very impressive also the food counters at the station were well presented and very clean. Then when you are on the train and it starts to take of, it increases at such a speed that you now understands why they call it the bullet train. It reaches a speed of over 250 km/hour. It was unbelievable and soon we were in Tokyo, the capital of Japan.

We did a lot of sightseeing which included a lunch where you had to sit on a very low stool and slide your legs horizontally under a table that was about one foot above the floor and the food was a lot of small dishes with all sorts of fishy bits that were completely strange to me. I think that it was a matter of do what the Romans do or I should say do as the Japanese do. By the end of the day we were back on board the QE2 again enjoying the food that we were more accustomed to.

From there, after a few days at sea, we got to Manila in the Philippines where we joined in with a group of other passengers to do a coach tour through the various parts of this city. I have never seen so much poverty in my life and it was obvious that most people had no future at all as they were living in the worst slums you could imagine. All that they could do was beg the tourists for money. From there it was four days at sea to Singapore where we caught the plane back home to Perth ending a lovely break from all the hard work that I had been doing. Riet would have said that it was self inflicted but just the same we were glad to be home again and in our own bed.

I was keen to find out how Kevin and Jane’s house was progressing in my absence and when I called in after a few days being home I realized that there was plenty of work waiting for me to do like all the skirting boards, shelving and the staircase hand railing leading down to the basement.

I also undertook to do the brick paving at the front leading up to the extra wide garage. I had a sort of dead line because our son Chris, who had been living on the Gold Coast in Queensland as a cabinet maker now for a while, had met this girl by the name of Michelle Hyatt. He was head over heals in love with her and had announced their wedding to be on the 20th of April 1991 and it was to be on the Gold Coast. I also wanted to do some preliminary work on the last villa site which was going to be Hema Court before we went to the wedding in April.



Terry's developments in Magnolia Way Forrestfield.

The money that I had borrowed at the start of my building program, when I built Dawson Village, had been paid back in full and the Leiden place development paid for itself with the sale of all the building blocks there making both villages free of any debt.

With 26 lots of rent coming in, plus the other four of Cambridge Village, making it a total of 30 lots of rent every month, I had a healthy cash flow and I did not mind managing these rentals myself. You hear so often that when a real estate agent manages a rental property, they are not looked after as they should. I know not all real estate agents are like that but it did happen and many tenants got away by not paying their rents on time but I kept a tight reign on my units using a method that I have explained before already and for me it worked and doing it my self I saved myself some money.

My work in Connolly and what I wanted to do in Hema Court was completed just in time for Riet and I and some of our boys to go to Queensland to attend to Chris and Michelle's wedding. It was a welcome break from my hard slog and besides the wedding, we had a good time.

There was a lot of entertaining to enjoy on the Gold Coast and a few were worth mentioning. One was the bungee jumping using a giant crane. While we were watching our boys having a go at it, young Trevor, who was at that time not even twelve yet, wanted to follow his bigger brothers doing a jump. Of course the other boys encouraged him to do it but his Mum was not so keen but with the pressure, in particular from Kevin, he went for it by telling the men at this event that he was 14 years old. At the end of the jump, he was

presented with a photo of him doing the jump and a certificate of his achievement of now being a bungee jumper.

One day the whole family went on a canal cruise which was quite extensive showing all the luxury homes on the canal fronts with their boats moored on their jetties and then we saw where a speed boat was towing a large kite in the air with a chair hanging underneath it and a person was sitting in that chair. It was quite spectacular and as the speed boat was slowing down and the kite with chair underneath was slowly floating down towards the water, another boat with a flat top on it moved underneath the chair until it landed on it. It was amazing to see and it did not take long before the boat with the flat top moved along the cruiser that we were on and was trying to get people interested to have a glide on the kite for a price of course.

And then, we all had a surprise of a life time, as Mum said that she would have a go at it. We could not believe it but she insisted. I suppose now that she had said that she would do this she did not want to back out and lose face. Well good on her! They picked her up on the flat top boat and got her strapped in the chair waiting for the kite to come slowly overhead of her until it was hooked onto the kite and then as the speed boat increased its speed, Mum went up in the air hanging on for dear life with her hands on the armrests of the chair.

All the boys and me including were watching her up in the air as she was soaring around under this kite. When her time in the air had lapsed and she landed safely back on the flat top boat, I think everybody was relieved that nothing bad had happened. She had not even landed in the water. I must say that it took a lot of guts for her to pull this stunt. We also paid a visit to Movie World while we were there and that was worth the effort for what was on offer there to the public.

Well before going over East I had already submitted the plans to the Kalamunda Shire for the third Village which I chose to call HEMA COURT. It was made up from the first two letters of the names Henk and Maria (Maria being Riet's official first name by birth). This way I created some sort of a personal touch to this village. I had already decided that this third village would be my last one as I did not want to hunt for more land and keep on working as I had done for a number of years.

It was time that I started to take it a bit easier when Hema Court was completed. With the real estate market having a hard time with few buyers around, I thought that I would be better off renting the whole of Hema Court out to selected tenants upon completion.

With that I would have forty units and villas rented out and that would provide me with enough income to live on and to pay back a lot more than

required on my borrowings with the bank. In other words that was a very healthy position to be in. Another thing was exciting and that was the capital gain that I was going to get over the years ahead. Thinking back when I was considering buying the acre of land on the corner of Hale Road and Dawson Avenue, it was the best thing that I could have done because it all started from there.

Following the same routine as I had done before so many times and working the same long hours, and using the same subcontractors as before, I had the whole complex finished in about seven months with only one duplex at the front next to the main entrance into the village from Holmes Road and with a simple sign at the front inviting tenants to register, I soon had them all occupied.

Kevin made up a nice name board with Hema Court on it and it was fixed at the front of the brick screen wall on the right hand side of the entrance.

Shortly after the birth of Terry and Jeanette's second son, Callan Andrew, who was born on the 3rd of August 1991, Terry was getting keen to start doing what I had done over the years.John Mair started to subdivide the land of the drive-in pictures and putting the parcels of land on the market. There was a large piece on the other side of the Woodlupine Brook on Magnolia Way that got Terry's attention. We had a good look at it together and he went for it.

In his planning he was going to cut the land in half and build two villages of eleven villas each, similar to the ones that I had built in Palmyra with a family room and he was going to call it Magnolia Court. As he was building them he started a pre-selling campaign and because of its location he got a lot of interest and when the whole village was completed and he got his strata titles organized most of them were ready for settlement. With that it was possible for him to proceed with building the second village on the other half of the land, again with a set of eleven more villas and he named this village Jasmine court.

It sold just as quickly as the first one also because it was adjoining the Forrestfield Forum Shopping Center. The development of these two villages made Terry financially secure and he could tackle anything from here on. One thing he did was to buy a 2 ½ acre of land at 29 Bruce Road Maida Vale, just outside of Forrestfield and build a huge shed on it for starters.

CHAPTER 17

RETIREMENT

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By now it was the end of January 1992 and only three weeks before, on the 5th of January, Tim had married a girl living north of the river. He got to know her around the time that Chris had married the year before and her name was Tracey Prendergast. He had met her at Kevin and Jane's house at a birthday party. All of a sudden I had some time to spare with no more other projects to develop. I had tried to play golf previously, when I had the franchise office with Roy Weston in Forrestfield, but had given it away because it meant time away from the office. I only had six games with my brother Theo at that time, who was playing in Pickering Brook, and that was a golf course sort of on a lot of gravel ground and the greens were not so green. With that I mean that they had no grass on it at all but consisted of dark sandy soil on which you had to scrape a flat putting stretch to the hole on which to then put your ball to the hole in the middle. Now that I had the time to play, I talked to Theo and we arranged to play every Monday morning at the Hartfield Country Golf Club in Forrestfield and Theo directed me with a few pointers into the secrets of playing golf. It became a regular activity for the Monday morning and I learned to play golf a bit better.

Dean's relationship with Tammy became serious and after having a short spell of work on the Gold Coast they travelled to England, worked together in the hospitality trade and had alternative working periods at the island of Ibiza just East of Spain. Then at Christmas time at the end of 1991 they went back to Zimbabwe for a specific reason. Dean wanted to ask Tammy's parents officially for their permission to marry their daughter and at the same time meet them as he had not met them before. Of course they did not object as they could see that they were a good match and very much in love. So we soon found out that they had decided on a wedding date and it was to be in Bulawayo in Zimbabwe on the 8th of August 1992. Well we thought that was something to look forward to as we had never been in Africa before.

On Friday the 22nd of February 1992, shortly after I started to play golf and was taking it a bit easier, I took Riet and young Trevor out for dinner to a smorgasbord restaurant at the Garden City shopping center in Booragoon. It was one of those that had enormous large king prawns on ice and they reminded me of the large ones that we had back in 1966 in a Spanish restaurant in Hyde Park, England when we were there on our trip around the world. I really loved those big prawns particularly with the pinkish sauce that was standing next to it. So I loaded my plate with about ten prawns and got stuck into them, then I went back for some more and would you believe it I went back a third time. On top of that I helped myself to some more other food and then topped it off with some nice strawberry and ice cream. When we got home about 9:30 in the evening, I felt really bloated and then I realized that I had eaten a lot more than I should have.

So I went to bed thinking that I would feel a lot better in the morning. Riet also went crook at me for eating too much at the restaurant and I could only agree with her. I must have fallen asleep straight away but at about 2 o'clock in the morning I woke up with a terrible pain in my chest. I just laid there thinking that it would go away but after about ten minutes I got worried and woke up Riet. She then phoned the hospital in Armadale asking what to do and they said the quickest way would be to get him in the car and take him straight to the hospital as they would be waiting for us to arrive.

When I got there I was put on oxygen and an ambulance was ordered to take me to the emergency entrance of the Royal Perth Hospital. Riet followed in her car and I was placed into the Intensive Care Unit for treatment at this stage. Over the next couple of days they did a lot of tests and at the end the conclusion was that I had had a heart attack and they also noticed that my heart was beating irregular as was shown on the ECG. After ten days when the heart specialist had a talk to me and explained to me to take it easy for while, I was allowed to go home. He wanted me to come back to the hospital in one months time as he was planning to put an electric current through my heart in order to try and get it to beat normal again.

When you lie in your bed in the hospital and you are alone a lot of things go through your mind. I reckoned that I might have been over indulging myself, on that fateful Friday evening in Booragoon. I might have asked my heart to work too hard, in digesting all that big lot of food afterwards and the other thing that occurred to me was that this heart attack happened exactly forty years to the day after arriving in West Australia from Holland. I was glad to be home again and in my own bed and I took it easy for a while and then one month later I was back in hospital to allow this heart specialist to put this electric current through my heart. This was done while I was knocked out. I

was informed afterwards that they had a go at it three times, each time increasing the strength of the current, and after the third time the heart beat went back to normal again. A couple of weeks later at the follow up appointment with the heart specialist, my heart was beating irregular again and the heart specialist said that he would not repeat the electric current procedure again as he said that the heart seemed to be happy going irregular from here on. Then at the conclusion of this consultation he asked me if I had any questions and I then answered by saying: “I fart a lot “. He looked funny at me and then at Riet, who was with me at this appointment and who translated it into: “He passes a lot of wind”. I thought later on; don’t tell me that he does not know the word that I used, but apparently it was not part of his usual vocabulary!

At home it was only Trevor that was left with as all the other boys had moved out over the years. The bedroom that Trevor was using before was now empty and as he was now using the big bedroom in the rear of the house, I decided to convert his bedroom that was adjoining our ensuite bathroom into a large bathroom with a corner spa. It would mean taking out the brick wall between the bedroom and the ensuite and providing a double vanity basin in the new bathroom. I also had to put in a steel beam over where the wall was in order to support the roof structure. There was a lot of wall and floor tiling involved but Terry was very obliging to do that for me and I must say he was as good as any professional wall tiler.

It was a Sunday in May, and also Mothers Day, that Riet left early in the morning to take Trevor to baseball at the school grounds, that I, while in the shower experienced a funny feeling whereby I was unable to hang on to the hair shampoo bottle. Later on in the kitchen, making my bacon and eggs breakfast, I could not hang on to the eggs. After eating my breakfast, I sat at the table in the dining area when Jeff and Hazel called in because it was Mothers Day. Hazel made me a cup of coffee and when I picked it up I could not hang on to it and spilled it all over the table making a mess. Just then Riet came back with Trevor and she saw me sitting at the table. Hazel explained what had happened with the coffee and then she realized what was happening. “My God he is having a stroke”, she said. A quick phone call to the hospital in Armadale resulted with Riet being advised to take me straight to the emergency entrance of the Royal Perth Hospital. They were notified that I was coming in and I was put in an examination cubicle with doctors checking me out. They lifted my arm up and it would just fall down. I had no control over it at all. After a while all of a sudden I felt that I could lift my arm up again and I was then transferred to a ward and Riet was called in and we were told that apparently there must have been a blood clot in my brain that was causing a partial blockage and the pressure from the heart pumping blood to my brain must have pushed it

through and cleared it. I was kept in the hospital for observation for one week and I was put on medication immediately to thin my blood in order to prevent this happening again.

While I was spending my time there in this four bed ward, I recalled a funny experience with one of the other patients in the same room. Each four bed ward had its own bathroom and toilet and this patient had a stent put in one of his arteries though his groin and after this operation they had stitched up the wound in his groin. As the poor bugger was troubled with constipation, the nurse had told him not to put any pressure on his bowels as it may rupture the stitches on the wound in his groin. So he kept on going to the toilet every half hour and he was just trying to get rid of it. After the third attempt he came out of the bathroom all worried that he might have done some damage in his groin so he was standing in front of me. I was sitting in my chair beside my bed, and he asked if I could have a look. He then dropped his pajama pants and I had the shock of my life. This guy had so much gear hanging between his legs and no matter what was I going to pull all that lot to one side to look, so I said to him: “I think it looks all OK” and then with some relief on his face, he pulled up his pajamas and got back into his bed. When Riet came to visit me later on and I told her the episode with the other patient in our room, she just could not stop laughing, because my description of what had happened before, she could see it, as if she had seen it herself.

The renovation to our home was well and truly completed including the painting before we went on our trip to Zimbabwe by the middle of July for Dean and Tam’s wedding. We flew via Mauritius, where we spent four days sight seeing, and then to Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe, where we were met by Tammy’s father Alan Hardy, who then drove us south to Bulawayo, where his family lived. At that time they were experiencing a terrible drought and they had to live with very strict water restrictions, meaning not flushing the toilet until the third user had been on it and only 2 inches of water in the bath for three people to use this water one after the other and then this bath water was caught and put on the garden. While we were there we had a lovely time with Alan and Tammy’s mother, Judy, taking us to the Hwange safari park in the mid west of the country where we saw some interesting wild life such as elephants, tigers, lions with their cubs and whole herds of wildebeests and what was also unforgettable, the majestic giraffes moving around so graciously. We stayed overnight in a motel right in the middle of the safari park and it was amazing how the smaller monkeys were all over the place trying to get into your rooms and the odd time that they did, they stole anything that they could get hold of in particular hand bags and wallets. I had my super eight movie camera and I made a lot of film as we went along. I remember a shot with my

camera of two giraffes with their long necks crossing over each other with half lighted evening sky at the back ground. It was an amazing shot that I got on film.

From the safari park, we drove further North with Alan and Judy, Dean and Tam to the famous Victoria Falls which were on the very northern boundary of Zimbabwe and that was something else. When we were about 25 km away, we saw a massive mist cloud hanging over where we were told that the falls were and then when we got to within ten metres from this side of the ravine, we saw all that water rushing over the edge on the other side. It was so deafening that you just could not talk to each other because of the noise. You could stand there for hours taking it all in and you should see the width of the water cascade plunging down into the deep ravine. At this stage with the drought about, the area of the water cascade was broken up in sections but, we were told, that after the rains it would be uninterrupted for at least one kilometer wide. This was an experience that I will never forget and we will not forget the flight that we took in a small plane flying over the falls either. We spent two nights in the Victoria Falls Hotel nearby looking around the Victoria Falls during the day as it was so beautiful and further down the canyon there was a large steel bridge on an arch type construction that was very impressive as the canyon was so deep underneath it. This bridge was carrying a road into Zambia, a country north of Zimbabwe. Alan took us over this bridge just to have another look over the Victoria Falls. It was a lovely trip for a whole week and it gave us a chance to see some of this country and we were very grateful to Alan and Judy for taking us around this amazing part of Africa.

Three days before the wedding it was Riet's birthday on the 5th of August and they prepared a nice party for her which was well appreciated by Riet and then the next day Jeff and Hazel sprang a surprise on the bride and groom to be, by appearing at the front of Alan and Judy's home. We knew about this but never said anything to anyone and Alan just went to the local airport to pick them up all in full secrecy. Jeff and Hazel were on their way to England for a holiday and to visit Hazel's family, so they took a detour via Zimbabwe for the wedding which was really nice. When Dean saw Jeff and Hazel he could not control himself and yelled out; Fuck!!!!!! And then he gave him an almighty bear hug. He just could not believe his eyes and this was the last thing that he expected. It added a lot of joy to the impending wedding.

Talking about Jeff, I should mention here that after they got married they bought a block of land in Arlington Drive in Willetton and we all helped him in building their home with a big shed at the back. Over the years he worked as a fixing carpenter contracting for the various builders and then when they

were making their plans to go to England via Zimbabwe, they sold their home as they did not know at that time how long they were going to stay in England.

Judy was a ballet dancing teacher and she soon had Riet doing some work to the dresses of the pupils in her class which kept her hands busy in some of her free time and then the wedding was a big thing for the friends and family of Tammy. The service was in an old stone church building and very beautifully conducted by the pastor who was a fairly young man but was very sincere in what he said and it did make a lasting impression on us. The wedding reception was something else as a lot of people participated in making it a happy event. Judy, the mother of the bride, performed with a friend of hers to bring the character of "Kermit the Frog" which she danced herself. It was an amazing performance and it showed her as a trained dancer with a lot of experience.

The newly wedded couple looked very happy in their new status as husband and wife and they were ready to take off on their honeymoon. We had been looked after by Alan and Judy very well and shortly after the wedding we were ready to fly back home to Perth with a one day stopover in Mauritius.

During the last days in Zimbabwe, Riet had not been feeling that well and she was going to see her doctor as soon as we got home. It was found out that she had gall stones and she was booked into the Saint John of God Hospital in Belmont to have them removed. She came out of the operating theater with some startling news. The doctor decided after removing the gall stones, that it would be better to also remove the gall bladder completely while she was still open. When we were presented with his bill he charged first for removing the stones and then an extra bill for the second operation of removing the gall bladder. I thought that he was double dipping but I was not going to argue with him as it was covered by the Hospital Benefit Fund anyway. After one week in hospital she was back home again and although a bit weak, she was glad that it was all over. Soon she was into her normal routine of cooking and washing as if nothing had happened to her. I also got back to doing the things that I was doing before we went to Zimbabwe like playing golf with Theo and attending to the 40 rental units and villas. When you have that many of them there are always tenants giving notice and moving out and new tenants to interview and screen for suitability and keeping tab on the rents being paid in time. The good thing was that it was not physically draining on my body like it was when I was doing the building. Five months before, just before I suffered my stroke, I turned 60 years old and looking back over the years I could see that I had worked hard a lot, doing long hours and I concluded that I, and Riet beside me, had earned our retirement well and truly.

Trevor had just been enrolled at Lumen Christi Catholic College in Gosnells and I was soon asked to give a helping hand doing all sorts of little

jobs around the school grounds as they were well aware of my building background. As I had experienced before, they are always on the hunt to get things done around the place on the cheap and this mug fell for it again! Not that I did not enjoy doing things that needed doing as I know that I am a sucker for punishment as the saying goes. I remember that in the grounds there was an open drain to carry storm water to a catchment lake and as they wanted to make a drive across it, part of the drain had to be piped. Four foot concrete liners had to be put in the drain at the correct levels to allow the flow of water through it for the wet season and then at each end an abutment had to be cemented up using all sorts of rocks to contain the sand filling around and over the pipe. Another big job that I was asked to do was to build bus shelters. Every day four busses delivered and picked up students at the school and up until then these kids were standing either in the rain or in the hot sun and that situation was not very good. So at the spot where the busses were picking them up in the afternoon they asked me to construct the shelters. It meant making the steel frames out of 75 mm galvanized piping. During the week I worked in their large storage shed cutting all the components to the layout that I had marked out on the concrete floor and one of the parents, who had access to a mig welder, was there on the Saturday to do all the welding that I had prepared for him to do. After two weeks of work like that we were ready to set out the locations of the holes in the ground and with the help of some of the parents all the holes were dug using a couple of picks and heavy crow bars to loosen the hard gravel ground all in readiness to erect the steel frames. Then we again with some parent's assistance mixed the concrete on site taking a long Saturday to complete that part of the job. The next two weeks I worked on my own to put the purlins on the frames making up the gutters and installing them and then doing all the roof sheeting and wall cladding in order to complete it all. When that was finished all that needed to be done was to pour the concrete floors in the shelters using ready mix concrete delivered to the school site on a Saturday morning. Everybody was impressed with the end product and I am sure that the kids appreciated the shelters in the end. Needless to say, that I was on various school committees, because I was a useful parent with plenty of time on my hands.

I was starting to get itchy feet and I felt that we both needed a break somewhere and then by chance I saw in the West Australian an advertisement by West Travel about Trafalgar Tours describing a European holiday lasting 6 weeks in total. It would be in May next year being 1994. Riet jumped at it as if she could not get away quick enough and as we knew that Jeff and Hazel would be well able to look after Trevor, there was nothing to stop us really doing this

so we made the bookings with West Travel and from there on waited for the time to come around for us to step on the plane.

Again talking about Jeff and Hazel, they did not stay long in England and when they came back to W.A. they bought a new home that had just come on the market in Forrest Lake Drive, Thornlie and settled back into their routine as if they had never left.

Before we knew it May 1994 had arrived and we were flying to London with a group of about forty other people on the same guided tour. We were given some free time in London to explore on our own and then after two days we all boarded a coach in the morning and drove to Dover where we boarded the ferry to Calais. The coach stayed in England as we were to board another coach in Calais that would carry us all around Europe for the next four weeks. Once we were at sea and could look back towards Dover, where we had just come from, we could understand the song about the white cliffs of Dover. It was amazing how white they really looked and you would have to be at sea to be able to appreciate it properly.

The trip across the Channel did not take all that long and soon were all seated in the European coach with our luggage stored in the hold at the base of the coach. We were introduced to the coach driver and also the tour guide who, as we were told later on, was a professor in history. Now if you have never been on a guided coach tour, we were explained that everyone would be on the same seat for just that day and then the following day everybody would move one seat forward for those that were sitting on the left of the coach and those that were sitting on the right hand side would shift one seat backwards.

This way everybody would get a turn to sit in the front seat and so would have a good view at the road in front of the coach. As it turned out we were sitting behind the coach driver on our first day and next to the coach driver there was a seat for the tour guide so that those two would be able to talk to each other as needed.

We noticed that, as they both were from Belgium, they were speaking in their own language which was Flemish which is almost the same as the Dutch language. Throughout the tour we were going to stay the nights in Hotels where we were to have our evening meals and Brussels was going to be our first stay for the evening. Upon reaching Brussels we were driven through the red light district as the tour guide pointed it out to us. Then the two of them reverted to their own language, remarking on a young girl jogging along, who was well endowed, as they say, whereby certain parts of her were well alive, if you know what I mean and they were saying how much of a joy it was to see her jogging along. Now we looked at each other as those two made that

enlightening remark to each other and then Riet said in Dutch to them that it was nice to see that woman so very much alive.

You should have seen the reaction of those two in front of us as that was the last thing that they had expected. Their faces changed to red and we had a lot of fun in seeing this transformation. From there on they were very careful in whatever they said that was not meant for our ears.

The next morning we had some interesting sight-seeing in Brussels before going on the road to Amsterdam. It was twelve years since we left Holland to go back to Western Australia, so it was interesting to see if it had changed much since then. Once settled in the hotel in Amsterdam right in the center of the city, it was nice to go for a stroll along the canals particularly as we had seen all this before during our stay in Holland. The next day we were taken on a canal cruise in one of those low boats with glass tops and it was very interesting to see the various buildings along the waters edge including the Hilton Hotel where we were staying that night.

We were also taken to a place where they did the cutting of diamonds and preparing these precious stones for the market like they also did in Antwerp in Belgium. Amsterdam was renowned for its expertise in this trade. We were soon on our way leaving Holland behind us and moving into Germany where our destination was Koln, which is not far from the Dutch border and just East of Maastricht, the most Southern city in Holland in the province of Limburg. Koln was very big and impressive and we had a look at various places of interest including a large and old but majestic cathedral in the heart of the city.

Driving along the German Highways, which are called “Autobahns”, we noticed a number of road signs indicating where to get off and on at the various locations and these signs apparently had a lot to do with “farting”. They were shown as “ausfahrt” and “einfahrt” and as we were driving along it became a laughing matter which sort of broke the monotony of driving along but in the process we had a lot of fun. Then also as we entered a hotel lobby they had a bowl of peppermints on the reception desk with a sign attached to it wishing you a “gute fahrt”. I could not tell you if any of our fellow travelers had a good one or not. From there on we travelled south towards Switzerland and after a few days we arrived in Basel where we looked at where the river Rhine originated from the flow off from the mountains. We spent some days in the mountains going up the rack train and coming down in an enormous cable car, big enough to hold 80 people. It was amazing to experience this as the cable at times was at 45 degrees going down and we had a glorious view over the lower areas and a large lake further away and while we were in the mountains there was an abundance of snow around to play with.

From Switzerland we drove through a number of German places and in one of them we picked up a cuckoo clock in a souvenir shop as a memento of our trip through Germany. One of the places that we called in on the way to Vienna in Austria, still driving through Germany, was a former W.W.2 concentration camp, known as Dachau that was left intact as a reminder of the atrocities that took place during the Second World War in Germany. We were warned beforehand that it would be a very confronting visit and Riet decided to just stay in the coach while a number of us, mainly men, went through the gates and joined a guided tour through the camp and its buildings. I tell you it was a very eerie experience. It is part of the German history that the present German people would like to forget and understandably so.

Vienna was an interesting place to see as it had so much history in the music world in particular through the influence of the famous Johan Straus. We spent two nights there and then we were on our way to northern Italy and our destination of Venice. Now Venice was something else! Just about every building was built in the water with a large network of canals with arched bridges over them. As part of our tour we were put in those gondolas with about ten people in it and then there was a guy standing at the back of the gondola with a large stick in his hand pushing this thing along the water. Some of them were singing as if they were on stage singing in an opera. It created a special friendly atmosphere in an unusual setting with all these gondolas gliding through the water. We were taken through a glass blowing factory right on the canal waterfront where Riet bought some heart shaped colored glass pieces to remind us of Venice.

On the way to Rome, travelling through the mountains, we called in at Assisi where we stayed over night in an old monastery that was well below the standard that we were used to so far on our trip but it was very close to the church of Saint Francis of Assisi. The remarkable thing about this church was that there were really two churches, one at a lower level and the other one sort of half over the top of the lower one, making it a double storey church. It was made possible because the lower one was partly carved into the side of the mountain. Prior to us leaving on this holiday, we had visited my brother John and Riekie’s and their son Adrian who had been suffering from leukemia. He had been in remission for about five years and then it had flared up and he was going backwards very fast. He had been on our minds at times as we were traveling and then, it was on a Wednesday, the 31st of May, that we were shown through this unusual church structure that we lit two candles for Adrian and said a prayer for him. It was a week later when we phoned back home, just to stay in touch, that we found out that Adrian had died on that Wednesday. It was very hard to believe and our hearts went out to John and Riekie.

The next day we were off to Rome and spent two full days there as there was so much to see like the Colosseum, the Trevi fountain with the coins in it and of course Saint Peter's Basilica at the Vatican. We were taken down into some of the catacombs and that was a bit eerie but just the same it was and still is part of their history. In order to view part of the Papal Palace you had to queue up as there was a lot of interest to see it all. When we got inside we were shown a lot of the wall paintings and the rich furniture, of which there was an abundance of it around everywhere, and it occurred to me if all this was accumulated from the Saint Peter's penny that was collected around the world at certain times of the year. The following morning we were back in the coach and on our way south to Napels and then through to Sorrento. The attraction near this place was really the island of Capri, just off the coast from Sorrento. The sights here were just out of this world. The buildings that they were able to build on the shear rock face were amazing and from a builders point of view I asked myself: "How did they do it"? What was famous was the blue grotto at sea level into the side of the rock formation and you could only get into this grotto be means of a small rowing boat.

A larger boat would take you very near where the grotto was and then you had to move into the small rowing boat which would only take six people at a time plus the guy with the oars to bring you to the opening of this grotto. Then this guy would, by means of a thick rope that was anchored along the inside of the opening, pull the little boat with the six of us in it, through the opening and then all of a sudden we were in an entirely different world. How this came to be in existence is a wonder on its own. There was only one color in this grotto and that was a deep blue. With the water and the high curved ceiling, it was like an indoor sea, so large that it left a lasting impression on all those that had been in this grotto. There must have been at least six little rowing boats in this blue heaven and what made it like a fairy tale was when the guys that brought us into this grotto started to sing like tenors in an Italian opera. It was just beautiful and we all enjoyed it immensely.

The next morning we traveled north back towards Napels where we called in at the ruins of the ancient Roman city of Pompeii just about one hundred km east of Napels. The volcano that destroyed Pompeii is called Vesuvius. It was the enormous amount of hot ash that did the devastating damage. When we got there and were shown around it was a real eye opener of how those people lived in the early days. Apparently the eruption took place at 79 A.D. and at that time the people that were living there were not even aware that they were living almost on a volcano as there had not been an eruption there for over 1800 years and when the eruption took place they were taken by surprise. It



Standing from left: Hazel, Michelle, Denise, Trevor, Tam, Jane, Jeannette, Brody and Callan.
In front: Jeff, Chris, Paul, Dean, Kevin and Terry with Reegan.

happened so quickly which was found out when many people were discovered being busy in their daily routine. Parts of the structures were still standing up.

From there on we kept on travelling north following the coast road traveling through Rome and our next call was Pisa where the leaning tower of Pisa was a must to have a look at. Next to this tower stands the Cathedral of Pisa that is also suffering from leaning over a bit. The soil underneath these structures was not that good and as the tower itself weighs about 14,500 tons, the foundations were just not able to take this enormous weight. In fact, when they were constructing the tower, it started to lean already a bit. Construction was started in 1173 and eventually it was completed in 1399, taking a total of 226 years from start to finish. In recent years structural engineers around the world have been invited to come up with solutions to prevent the tower falling over and what has been started to prevent the falling over was by loading massive amounts of lead on that side of the tower that was sinking the least. Over the years there had not been any further movement and for the tourists sake it has to stay as a leaning tower.

From Pisa we kept on following the coast line as we were now planning to drive to France. The road along this part of the country was very rocky and we were able to see the ocean a lot which was really the Gulf of Genoa. Constructing this road right up to the French border must have been the most expensive stretch of highway in the world as there are more than 70 bridges

and tunnels all the way along. In fact the tour guide got us to count them as we went along and made it into some sort of a competition for the correct answer. Driving along this highway we saw some spectacular scenery which made the trip from Italy into France something to remember for a long time. We eventually crossed the border into France and we stopped at Monaco, known amongst other things for the yearly Grand Prix racing through the streets. We were shown the Casino but were only allowed into the main entrance hall as entrance into the Casino was for selected guests. I suppose only those with plenty of money could enter into the great area where all the gambling took place. We did notice that there were some very large cruisers moored in the harbour and that was an indication of the wealth that was around in this place. From here it was only a short ride to Cannes where they have the yearly Film Festivals and what I remembered of this place was that on the beach the girls were moving around topless as if it was just show time. It must have been the normal thing to do here at Cannes. Mind you I was not complaining!

From here we drove via Lyon to Paris where we spent three days looking around. The Arc de Triumph was commissioned by Napoleon in 1806 to commemorate victories of the French armies. It was and still is quite a monumental archway that stands out in the middle of a traffic island near the centre of the city.

Of course the Eiffel Tower was a must see and we did. What a magnificent structure being 324 metres high when it was built in 1889. The engineer/designer was Gustave Eiffel and he surely made a name for himself with this tower. The first and second levels have stairs and lifts leading to it and both levels also have restaurants giving you fantastic views in all directions of Paris and we did really enjoy being there at both of these levels. The third level is right at the top and that can only be reached by lift. We also visited one of the most visited chateaus in France and that was the Chateau de Versailles just outside Paris. It has played major roles throughout its existence, not only during the French monarchy, but throughout the history of the French Republic and this palace is still used for both houses of parliament to sit. Chateau de Versailles is a grand example of French architecture and the Versailles' history galleries, which are about 18,000 metres squared in size and that makes this the largest history museum in the world, with the contents comprising many different and significant masterpieces. I have never seen anything like it before. As a group we also attended an evening show and during this show they invited some members of the public to participate and of course this mug went for it and it was quite funny really.

Because we had some free time in Paris we went for some long walks with two other couples that we got to know during the tour. Amongst other things

we even went underground in the tubes and had a lot of fun doing that as that sort of thing was new to us. One couple was from the north of the river in Perth and the others were from a place near Mildura at the Murray River north of Melbourne. From there on it did not take long to get back to Calais where we were transferred onto the ferry heading for Dover.

At this point of time we had been away from home for more that four weeks and it had been very busy going in and out of hotels having early breakfasts and even at times we fell asleep sitting in the coach. I remembered the tour guide said that when he looked back along the centre corridor of the coach he saw all those sleepy heads hanging side ways. A different coach picked us up from the ferry terminal in Dover and we were soon on our way to London for the British part of our tour. When we were settled in our hotel we met up with our son Paul.

Now I must tell you a bit about Paul. When I finished building Coburg Village in Forrestfield, Paul bought number three as an investment and rented it out. He then met this girl Sharon at Kevin and Jane's place in Joondalup. Jane was doing some match making of her own. Jane was at that time working at the Challenge Bank in Perth and Tracey Prendergast and another girl named Sharon were both working with her. At Jane's birthday party she invited both these girls and was planning Tracey for Paul and Sharon for my other son Tim, who was also at this party. As it turned out Tim went for Tracey and Paul went for Sharon and as time went on those two couples became items. So in Paul's case, after a while, they moved in together into Paul's villa and about a year later they decided to go to England to work there on a working holiday. The thing about Sharon was that she could not cook so Paul was doing the cooking at home. It was often said that Sharon could cook water and that was it! During their stay in England things did not work out and Paul and Sharon parted. Paul then moved to Henley on Thames, where they hold the regatta, and that is where he met Denise Goodall. It was with Denise that we met up in the evening in the hotel of our first night back in London as we were supposed to be introduced to Paul's new girlfriend and we were going to have dinner together. After the introduction I put my big foot in it by asking Denise if she could cook. Boy did I cop it afterwards but in all fairness I just wanted to find out for Paul's sake.

The next morning we started on our tour of England and Scotland by going west via Southampton to have a look at Portsmouth and the enormous harbour works. We also saw the real life HMS Victory which was located permanently in a dock yard. This was the ship that was involved in the battle of Trafalgar in 1805 on which Lord Nelson, the Admiral of the British Navy, was mortally wounded. Little was I to know at that time that many years later

I was going to build a four foot long model of this historic ship in all its final details and all done in wood as the original ship was built. From Portsmouth travelling through Southampton we went to Bath near Bristol and on the way we had a visit to the Stonehenge site. It was most unusual to see those massive stones set out in the ground at random with a massive one over the top of some of them. It is probably the most important prehistoric monument in the whole of Britain. It stands as a timeless monument to the people who built it. The Stonehenge that we see today was completed 3500 years ago and it took about 1500 years to build.

Looking at it you can't help wondering what drives generations of people to put this amazing construction together. An hour later we were in Bath where we stayed the night. The next morning we saw some more historical stuff in the form of an old Roman bath which drew its waters from one of the three natural springs in the area. The bath was quite big and open aired with buildings around it and because of the springs it smelled very much like sulphur. In the early Roman days it was a popular place to relax.

We saw a lot of the country side as we travelled through Birmingham and Manchester and then into the Lakes Districts in the north west of England and from there to Edinburgh we went. This was an interesting place to see particularly as on TV we had seen the shows of the Edinburgh Tattoo. We were shown the famous Edinburgh castle that you see on the show and the show area with the seating arrangements on both sides and now every time, after having been there, when we see the Tattoo on TV, it brings back the memories of this great place. On our travels into Scotland we called in at St. Andrews, famous for the origin of the game of golf. We got a chance to see the golf course but we were told that if you wanted to book a game there you would have to wait a few days and the fees were quite high. There was a shop at the edge of the golf course where you could buy golf items and as I was already a regular golfer I bought two towels for cleaning golf balls and club heads with the name of St. Andrews on it. I still have them and one is always attached to my golf bag.

We drove alongside of the Loch Ness Lake and we were supposed to see the famous monster but we were informed by the tour guide that just this particular day this monster was having a nap and was not available to the public! The drive through Scotland to the very north west, going through mountainous country, was giving us an indication of how rugged it was and when we arrived at Kyle, we had to wait to board a ferry in order go over to the Island of Skye. The trip with the ferry was very short as the distance to the island was only about 500 metres. I believe that nowadays there is a bridge in place so there is no need for the ferry anymore. The way back to London was more through the middle of England and we were shown many castles of all

shapes and sizes. It was noticeable that in Europe we saw a lot of churches and cathedrals while England it were the castles that were on show to us.

When we were ready to board our flight back to Perth, we had been on the go for six weeks and we were looking forward to not having to get up early in the morning in order to be ready for the coach to move on again. It was a remarkable holiday with a lot that we had seen and to take in but it was nice to be home again.

I was pleased to find out that Terry had looked after all my forty rentals very well with no dramas at all and all the rents paid in time and Jeff and Hazel had cared for Trevor in every way possible and we were very thankful to them for that. Talking about Trevor, he made it clear that he wanted to finish school at the end of that year and he was interested in becoming a roof carpenter. The best thing for him was to do a one year pre-apprenticeship course at TAFE and the only spot available for the year 1995 was in the Swan TAFE Balga Campus at Mirrabooka Avenue in Balga. For him to get there by bus would mean leaving home at six o'clock in the morning and again by bus coming home he would be home by about seven o'clock at night and that would be a long day so when he started to go to TAFE in February 1995 we would take it in turns bringing him there and picking him up every day.

It was towards the end of 1994 that Terry found a large block of land with an old house on it in Deschamp Road in Morley. With the zoning of R30 he could build 9 villas on it and after looking it over with him he decided to buy it and get our usual designer Russell Jones from Forrestfield to do the designs for it. As he had done so well out of the other two villages in Forrestfield, this one should also be a money spinner and that was all important. Like me it was a matter of working on the job himself and that way got it moving along smoothly to completion.

From here on I will give you some information about some of our boys. Tim and Chris both had finished their apprenticeships and continued to work in their trades. They both decided then to move over to Cairns and stay with Kevin and Jane for a short while in about June 1988. Tim managed to get a job at Lizard Island as a chef and Chris drifted down to the Gold Coast and got job with a cabinet firm called the Bar Company. Then in October of that year, when he was visiting the Expo in Brisbane, he met Michelle Hyatt who lived at the Gold Coast. Tim eventually left Lizard Island and came back to Perth and stayed back home until he moved into his own villa at number one at Coburg Village in January 1990. He managed to get a job as a chef at the Burswood. Paul and his girlfriend Denise left their jobs in Henley on Thames in England by the middle of October 1994 and decided to travel through half of Africa from the north down to the south before returning back to W.A.

Denise went through to New Zealand to spend Christmas with her parents and Paul moved back into his own villa at number 3 in Coburg Village. I believe that he made numerous phone calls to New Zealand urging Denise to join him in his villa in Forrestfield and apparently he was able to persuade her that her place was besides him, because it did not take long for Denise to join him in his villa. It was in August 1995 that they noticed a very old house being offered for sale at 183 Kalamunda Road on ¾ acre block that got their attention. It was obvious that the location and the views towards Perth was the attraction and they asked what I thought of the property as it was and what I thought of the asking price. I agreed with them that the location was great and the potential to build an above average home was just calling for it, so they put in an offer and were lucky to get it at a reasonable price.

With that they put Paul's villa on the market and after the old Asian people moved out of the old home, Paul and Denise spent some time cleaning the old place good enough to live in, while they worked on the plans for their new home. They lived in the old place for about three years in which they were able to eliminate their debt and save some money for their future building program. Denise had been working in computing with QBE Insurance in Perth since she had come back from New Zealand and Paul had been working in his trade as a subcontract carpenter. They decided to build a brick workshop just inside the front boundary, in which they were going to live while they then pulled down the old place and prepared the site for their new home.

After Tim and Tracey got married in January 1992, they decided to sell the villa in Forrestfield and move north of the river near to where Tracey's parents were living and had a new house built nearby.

As time moved on the relationship between Riet and Tim started to deteriorate and over a period of time it went from bad to worse to the point that Tim expressed his desire to break completely from the family.

What did not help also was that at the Burswood, where he was still working, he was every time overlooked when other people were getting promoted. In the end they sold their home and moved to the Gold Coast. It is something that we have learned to live with although it did hurt and as they say, it does happen in the best of families.

Dean and Tam, after leaving England for good towards the end of 1994, travelled through Asia back-packing and eventually they landed in Perth in early 1995 and stayed with us in our games room for a few weeks while they looked and found an old house in Rivervale to rent. Dean got a job as a chef at the Como Hotel in South Perth and Tam started to work in Frasers Restaurant in Kings Park as a waitress.

Two years later Dean got promoted to take charge of the kitchen in the Sail and Anchor Hotel in South Terrace, Fremantle and with that move, he also moved with Tam into a two bedroom unit in Palmyra, which was a lot better than the old joint in Rivervale. In April 1994 Chris and Michelle moved back to Perth after Terry advised him that as a subcontract carpenter doing fixing in new homes, he could earn a lot more money than just working inside a cabinet shop working on wages. He took the plunge and was soon working flat out after setting himself up with his tool trailer and equipment. He also moved into unit 12 in Dawson Village when that became vacant.

In October of that year we had our 35th wedding anniversary and we organized a family dinner in the Parmelia Hilton Hotel in Perth for the whole family and we also invited Tim and Tracey but they declined to be there. It was at this anniversary dinner that we were presented by all the boys and their partners with a beautiful picture of all our family.

Probably because I had a fair amount of leisure time, I started to look for another holiday and this time I was looking at the USA. As the travel agent at West Travel in the city had looked after us so well on the European tour, we called in there and were told what was on offer. They were in the process of putting together a holiday package that would last six weeks and it would include Disney Land in L.A., the east and the west of the USA and the east and the west of Canada. It would include a fair amount of flying as well. She recommended that we should look as an extra to take in a cruise from Vancouver into Alaska which is known as the Inside Passage. It sounded good to us and we decided there and then to go for it and we booked to be on this tour that left Perth in early May. There were only a few couples that also opted to do the Inside Passage cruise. So those that did this cruise left a week earlier than the main group.

We flew from Perth straight through to L.A. and took another flight to Vancouver where we boarded the Holland America Line cruise ship the Noordam. I must say it was an amazing ship and the food was just out of this world. For breakfast you could help yourself and there was an enormous amount of smoked salmon available and I just went for it. Following the coastline going north through a maze of islands our first port of call was Ketchikan. It has a lot of Alaska Indian history and we were shown a field full of Indian Totem poles beautifully carved, all set out in a circle out in the woods. Most of the buildings were all wooden structures and during one of the excursions we were shown a bald eagle. The next call was Juneau where we were treated to a visit on top of a glacier by means of a helicopter. It was well worth the expense of doing that as you would never again get the chance to do it.

Actually standing on top of that ice with all the crevices around you, some of them filled with water blue in color, was just an amazing experience. From there on the Noordam found its way to Skagway where we were taken onto another glacier and loaded into a monster vehicle with about three meter high wheels and taken across the mountains of ice and snow giving you the feeling of isolation as if you were on some sort of a planet. It sure left a mark in my memory.

When back on board the cruise ship we slowly moved into a waterway all surrounded by mountains on both sides and at the end the ship just stopped and gave us the most interesting view that you could imagine as the glacier was slowly crumbling over the edge and pieces of ice were plunging into the water. It was just spectacular to see and then you saw all large pieces of ice floating in the water around you. Leaving this scene behind we then went none-stop back to Vancouver to catch a flight back to L.A. in order to join up with the large group of people that we were going to spend the next leg of our holiday with.

After an overnight stay in a hotel we were at the entrance of Disney Land just south of Los Angeles in Anaheim. It is an enormous theme park where you could spend a whole week and still you would not have seen and enjoyed all that was on offer. There was also the Indiana Jones spectacular with its deafening music. In order to enter any of the events paid for by your entrance fee, you would have to join a queue and wait for one hour or so before you could participate so we missed out on a lot as we only had one day there. In the early evening the new song and the spectacular procession of the Lion King, a theme that had only just come out around the world, started to go around with all the characters dancing in this procession with the music very loud sounding wherever you were. Then by about ten o'clock in the evening there was a massive display of fireworks to finish the day with. The coach took us back to the hotel and I can tell you we both were dog tired.

Our tour through the western part of the USA started the following morning and we met our tour director, a lady with a very strong American accent. Whenever she was referring to any wild animals she was calling them critters so during the tour whenever we saw any sort of an animal we would yell out that we saw a critter. It became a lot of fun while she was with us. We first drove to San Diego which is just above the Mexican border and then the coach driver took us right up to the boarder of Mexico and we were allowed on foot to cross the boarder by going through a rotating gate into Mexico. We were warned to stay together as a group for safety's sake and come back two hours later again through this rotating gate. The name of the place in Mexico was Tijuna and the streets were full of Mexicans trying to sell you anything. From

there we drove to Phoenix in Arizona and in the process we got a glimpse of the remoteness of this part of the country. The motel where we stayed in overnight had in the centre a large complex of boutique shops and in the middle of it there was a large area where you could relax with seating arrangements and with that there was also a grand piano.

I walked to it on my own while the others were near the shops and I noticed that this piano was one of those that had a gadget in it so it would play on its own and you could sit at this piano and pretend that you were actually playing on the piano and that is what I did. The others near the shop looked at me and said to Riet that they did not know that Henk could play the piano so well and it all became a big joke.

From Phoenix we drove north, still in Arizona, and arrived at the Grand Canyon which is a steep-sided canyon carved out by the Colorado River. It is considered a Wonder of the Natural World. The Grand Canyon is 446 Km long, up to 29 Km wide and attains a depth of 1800 metres. There was an opportunity to fly over the Grand Canyon by helicopter and we did that and it was just great to see this natural wonder from the top. Driving through a lot of mountains we finally got to Las Vegas and we were booked in at the Flamingo, right in the heart of the city entertainment area. Within this huge complex there was also a casino where a lot of people were trying to make money and not doing it. In the gardens of the hotel they had live pink flamingos walking around to match the pinkish color of the hotel. Straight opposite the Flamingo Hotel was Caesars Palace where they were putting on all sorts of shows. We looked at one involving a magician with two white tigers which was quite impressive. When we left Las Vegas we drove through Death Valley which is the largest National Park in the USA with real ghost towns on show to you. It is located in the state of California and from there we moved on to Yosemite National Park, one of the first wilderness parks in the USA, best known for its waterfalls. We saw one that was sort of three tiered, meaning that it started from the top, finished about one third down and started again and did a second drop before starting on the bottom fall. By standing further away from it you could get a really good look at it and it was just spectacular.

We stayed the night nearby and then the next morning we started to travel in the direction of San Francisco. It was a very interesting drive and then all of a sudden we saw all these wind turbines all around us on those high masts on both sides of the highway. There were hundreds of them all going around at the same speed obviously making electricity. It was a fascinating sight and it went on for many kilometres. There are two things that I remember clearly about this fascinating city. The first one was the Golden Gate Bridge and its construction. It is a suspension bridge which is 2.7 Km long with the longest

single span of 1.28Km. It took four years to construct and was completed in 1937. It is claimed to be the most photographed bridge in the world and I was certainly impressed by it. The second thing that I remembered was our visit to the Fisherman's Wharf where we saw a number of barges floating between some fishing boats with a lot of seals laying on them making their funny noises as they were getting in and out of the water. At the food stalls there was an enormous amount of fish on offer and of course we had a fish meal there. After an overnight stay we were driven to the airport to board a flight to Vancouver to start the west Canadian part of our tour.

We were soon on a ferry to cross over to Vancouver Island to visit Butchart Gardens which is located near Victoria. It is a very well presented flower show on a total of 55 acres of land and it was well worth seeing it. Although it drizzled all day we were provided with plastic brollies. The next morning we were back into a new coach with a Dutch driver. He showed us around the beautiful mountain country side for the next few days until we got to Banff where we were taken to Lake Louise. Banff is a well known ski resort and it attracts many tourists for that purpose. When we got to Calgary, we were shown where the 1988 Winter Olympics were held and they even showed us where the bobsleigh run was, on which the Jamaican four man team did their debut run. It was an amazing place to explore and there certainly was some history there. Then we were off to the airport again and this time we were flying to Pittsburgh in the state of Pennsylvania. This was the area where the Civil War was raging during 1861 and also around nearby Harrisburg. It seemed a bloody war with a lot of human casualties and now they have a large National Civil War Museum to highlight all the events of that time. Not that far away was Washington D.C. the capital city of the USA. D.C. stands for formally the District of Columbia in case that you did not know! It was named after the military general and first President George Washington who lived from 1733 until 1799. There were many well visited places to see like the White House, the Lincoln Memorial, the Jefferson Memorial and the Washington Monument. We sure did enjoy a tour of these famous locations.

From there, via Philadelphia, we drove to New York where we were treated to a visit to the Statue of Liberty. The people of France gave the Statue to the people of the United States over one hundred years ago in recognition of the friendship established during the American Revolution. A cruiser took us around the rivers of New York and part of this cruise was a visit to this Statue which was just massive. We were told that the actual statue was manufactured in France, shipped in crates to New York and then assembled on the little island on top of a massive granite foundation structure. Also during this cruise we saw the Twin Towers Trade Centre. Little did we know then that some six

years later terrorists would attack these towers with airplanes and completely destroy them! The next day our group of forty odd travelers was going to be split up. About half of them were going back home to Australia and the rest, including us, were going to join another group of twenty in order to complete the rest of our tour. When we were assembled into our coach we realized that the new group of people were from Holland and when we were sitting down in the coach one of them remarked in Dutch something like: “We are going to be joined by these stupid Australians” and Riet answered, in Dutch, to this person by saying: “These Australians are not so bad you know”. This resulted in a change of facial color of this bloke.

From New York we drove through Boston and then headed north to Quebec in Canada. As we were moving along the country-side we got talking to a young Dutch couple sitting behind us. We found out that their parents were on this coach also and the parents introduced themselves as Rene and Ineke van Lierop and they were from Helmond just east of Eindhoven. Right throughout the tour at about every two hours there would be a “pit stop”, as they were called, for necessary nature calls and at the same time you could get some refreshments if you so desired. From Quebec via Montreal and Toronto we were heading for the Niagara Falls as this was a major attraction and everybody was looking forward to this.

We were booked into the hotel upon arrival and the next day we were to spend our time around this natural spectacle. First we walked along the top end of the falls alongside the Niagara River where the water was flowing from Lake Erie through the falls into Lake Ontario. The Niagara Falls is the collective name for the Horseshoe Falls and the adjacent American Falls along with the comparatively small Bridal Veil Falls. It has a vertical drop of more than 50 metres. The nearby Rainbow Bridge is part of the scenery. We had lunch in the revolving restaurant at the top of the Skylon Tower which was very close to the Niagara Falls and from the top of it we had a splendid view over the whole of the combination of all the falls. In the afternoon we all got on the “Maid of the Mist” boat and we were supplied with a clear blue plastic coat for protection and then the Maid moved us very close to the bottom of the Horseshoe Falls for a real experience of this magnificent waterfall. I tell you we did need those plastic raincoats because the mist from the falls was almost like a heavy shower. They were free and you could keep them as a souvenir.

The following morning we were off to the airport of Buffalo not far away to go to the next destination which was Miami in Florida. The reason for this trip was to have a look at Cape Canaveral and Cape Kennedy where they have been doing the launching of the space shuttles and to make a visit to the Kennedy Space Center. The grounds where the launching takes place were

connected by a wide solid road leading to an enormous high building structure. Here the space shuttle was up righted and attached to the tower structure with all the additional firing and fuel tanks complete with all equipment. This tower was a permanent part of this large vehicle and then the whole lot was slowly rolled to the spot where the actual launching takes place. Not far from the launching area there was a sort of grand-stand for the public to be allowed to actually witness the launching and we were also taken to this grand-stand I suppose just to get the feel of it. From there we were taken to the Kennedy Space Center close by to be shown a lot of the technical information about the space travel and we were even given a chance to sample special food that is prepared for the astronauts such as the ice cream which was like small grains but really tasted like ice cream. This certainly was an interesting experience not to be missed.

The next morning we drove back to Miami for the flight to New Orleans in Louisiana. Once settled in at the hotel we were told that the following morning after a walk through the famous Jazz district with their cafes, we were to be driven to the Mississippi River where we were booked on the Creole Queen, a 1000 passenger paddle wheeler which had a full strength jazz band on board and boy could they play while we were treated to a nice lunch at the same time. We were on the river for more than four hours and the time just flew by. We were due to fly back to L.A. late in the afternoon of the following day, but before that we were organized to go on the Honey Island Swamp Tour which is one of the most pristine river swamps in America. It covers nearly 70,000 acres of protected wild life area. Just in the Louisiana waters there are more that one million alligators and their population is still growing. We were taken around in middle size boats with no more than twenty people on board and the guide knew how to make a certain sound to make the alligators show themselves and when they did they were rewarded with, believe it or not,…. a few marshmallows. We made it just in time back to the airport to join our flight back to L.A., then onto a connecting flight with Qantas to Sydney and through to Perth non-stop. When we finally got home we needed a few long nights of sleep to get back to normal again. But I must say that it was a holiday that we would long remember as a great trip through America and Canada. We had been away for just over seven weeks and that was the longest holiday we had ever had.

We soon settled down in our usual routine and I was back with Theo at the Hartfield Golf course on the Monday mornings playing golf again. The other routine of finding new tenants for a villa or unit that became vacated was occupying my time as well and I had to spend a bit of time, particularly in

Margaret Village, to cut down some of the trees that had started to grow out of hand and clutter up the gutters.

On the TV, I had noticed an advertisement about the Port Geographe development in Busselton in the south west. We had been to Busselton often in the last 30 odd years as it was just such a peaceful place and the proposed canal development that they were advertising seemed interesting enough to check it out so one weekend we went there and had a good look around.

It was interesting to see how they were building the breakwater groynes with massive rocks tumbled on top of each other in order to create the entrance to the future marina and canal blocks. We made a point of going back every two months to keep an eye on the progress and in doing so I started to get to the point that I wanted to retire eventually in Busselton. With that I also started to get interested in looking at boats because if you wanted to live on the canals the next thing is a jetty at your door step with a cruiser moored at it.

With that future plan in mind I had to think about all those rentals that I owned in Forrestfield. There was no way that I could manage them from Busselton and I was not keen to have them managed by an agent so I came to the conclusion that it was time to gradually sell them. So from here on any time a tenant gave notice to move out, I got the painter Jim Olson to paint the walls and ceilings and patch up any cracks that may have come up and then I had home opens like I had done so often before on the Saturday and Sunday. It was a bit easier because the interest rates had come down quite a bit and therefore there were more buyers in the market place.

Then at the end of January 1996 we bought lot 487 at Lanyard Boulevard in Port Geographe with a deposit of $10,000 and the balance at settlement which was expected to be in about two years down the track. The next thing was to start looking for a boat and after some boat inspections of various sizes we settled for one that was on show in Fremantle with Beacon Marine in Mews Road. At that moment it was out of the water on stands as it had been transported on the road from Queensland. It was 36 feet long and it was fitted with twin Cummins diesel motors capable of doing between 22-25 knots an hour.

I paid a deposit and opted to settle by the end of April when some of my term deposits matured. I asked my boys for suggestions for a name and Chris came up with: “WHATALIFE”. I liked it and Kevin offered to do the sign writing for it. I was lucky to secure a boat pen in north Fremantle near the Water Police Station mooring. It was called Pier 21 and it was secure with a locked gate at the start of the jetty.

Two things happened on the 1st day of May that year. The first one was that Terry and Jeanette were blessed with their third son Reegan Jay and he

was also our third grand son. The second event of that day was the launching of our new Riviera cruiser with its name prominently displayed on both sides and on the stern.

They used a large crane to lift it into the water and then it was brought around the other side of the jetty which was at the back of Beacon Marine's place in Success Harbour where I had bought this cruiser. To celebrate the launching, with Riet by my side, I had organized drinks on board and with some of the boys there it was a pleasant afternoon particularly as Terry turned up later on after being with Jeanette for the birth of their baby Reegan. Late in the afternoon I skippered my new toy out of the Success Harbour into the ocean and then through the inner Harbour and under both the bridges to my new boat pen at Pier 21. I tell you it just felt so good!

One week later we were back in Busselton for our regular look around and we decided to buy Lot 507 in Keel Retreat of course in Port Geographe and in the same manner as we had done before. At regular intervals I was now selling units and villas and as a result of that I was fast reducing my debt with the bank to the point that I had no more debt by the end of the year.

One month before the launching of the boat, we had already organized with Kevin and Jane to spend a holiday together on Norfolk Island and that was planned for the first week in July for ten days and then we were going to spend four days in Sydney afterwards. Just before leaving on our holiday I became aware that the next lot of canal blocks was coming on the market during our trip away. So far all the canal blocks had only water frontages at the back of them and only to the extent of the width of the block, while on the plan of the blocks coming on the market there was one, being lot 523 in Keel Retreat, that had water at the back as well as on the complete side making this the most desirable block in the Port Geographe concept and I just wanted this one to build our home on.

As they were going to come on the market during our absence I arranged with the salesman, Steve O'Brian, to reserve this one for me and asked him to send the Offer and Acceptance by fax to Norfolk Island and I would return it signed to their office and in doing so this ideal canal block would be ours. And that was how it went.

We had a lovely time with Kevin and Jane on Norfolk Island and we did a lot of drinking and walking. Kevin and I played a round of golf on a par three golf course while Riet and Jane joined in for the walk with us and in doing so we had a lot of fun in the process. We also visited an old graveyard where we found some headstones with names on it who were mutineers of the Bounty. Some history that was! Riet was able to buy there a full set of Prince Albert Royal Dalton dinner set at a reduced price because it was tax free there. The

four days in Sydney thereafter was great as we did some harbour cruising and we saw the “Phantom of the Opera” in the Sydney Opera House which was an unforgettable experience.

On our return I got all the measurements of the block and the required setbacks from the canal walls from the engineering department of the Shire and I went to see our friend Russell Jones in Forrestfield, to get him started on the design of what was going to be our new double storey home on the canals. There was one request and that was that it had to have a lift in it to carry at least five people at the same time. I thought you just never know do you. Whenever I had the time I took the boat out on the water over the weekend and there were always some of the boys that would come along. While we were at Rottnest with the boat we noticed some people having fun on a jet ski and this little craft fascinated me. I thought we can have a lot of fun with too that so I made inquiries about them and I went and saw them at the Great Eastern Highway in Rivervale and ended up in buying a three seater SEADOO with trailer complete.

Trevor started his apprenticeship as a roof carpenter starting from February 1996 with a subcontractor who was living in Thornlie. In most cases his Mum would drop him off at this bloke’s place early in the morning and pick him up in the afternoon. His name was Graham Wakefield and he turned out to be a hard boss to work for but in hindsight it did him the world of good as he was turning Trevor into a tough young fellow and in later years Trevor did appreciate that.

With all the activity of enjoying the jet ski at some week ends, taking the cruiser to various places like Rottnest and Garden Island, having home opens and selling units and villas, playing golf with Theo and many other interesting things, the time passed along rapidly. Then there was the official opening of Port Geographe by the Premier of W.A., Richard Court, in December 1996 and for this we brought our Riviera cruiser down to Busselton over the ocean to be present at this event and we stayed there for a few days staying overnight on board of our boat. It was 1997 before we knew it and we started to make plans for our eventual move to Busselton. It was also around this time that Chris and Michelle moved out of their unit in Dawson Village and rented a house in Yangebup near Bibra Lake. They were ready for this move as they were anxious to start a family.

Then in April 1997 Jeff asked the two of us on one afternoon to follow him in our car to a place in Chatsworth Gate in Canningvale. When we got there we saw a lot of people and there was a large sign at the front with the words “Show Home” and the Builders name as “Boulevard Living” displayed on it. We were then informed that as a surprise to us, Terry and Jeff had formed a

partnership and this was their first show home and with drinks and nibblies it was officially introduced to the public. What a surprise that was! Jeff had been following a supervisor course, unbeknownst to us, and that was going to be his title in the business from here on. It was a very well presented four bedroom and two bathroom home in an attractive area that would be very appealing to the buying public. We both felt very proud of our two eldest son's achievement and congratulated them with this important step and we wished them both every bit of success.

As a result of the home opens they got a lot of building contracts and they were on their way. Inside the big shed that Terry had already built on his block in Maida Vale, Terry had built a nice office from where they would be running their new venture. He also started to build his own new home not far away from his shed on the same block.

CHAPTER 18

BUSSELTON

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The plans for our new home in Busselton were completed and on our next visit to Busselton I submitted them with the specifications to the Shire for their approval. I was told that although the approval would not be a problem, but the fact that there were no land title particulars available, I could not be given the final building permit until the title was provided. At the same time I made inquiries for getting a rental property to live in while I was building our home and I got a four bedroom home at number 10 Grant Street, not far from the canals, which would be available by mid October. While all this was going on, something else happened. Dean and Tam were blessed with their first son on the 28th August 1997 and he was named Riley Dacre. And that made him our fourth grandson. When we made another visit to Busselton in September, I had a talk to the person in charge of Port Geographe in order to find out when I could expect the land titles and in particular for lot 523, so that settlement could take place and I could make a start with the building of our home.

We were going to be the first ones to start building on the canals and the Port Geographe developers were keen for me to start as well but not having the title was going to stop me. In my planning I wanted to start no later than the middle of October but the developer thought that it could be as late as March in 1998 that these titles would be available. As a solution they offered to allow me to build on lot 523 as part of the large piece of land covering a number of acres of the original land area as the title deed for that was there of course. If I was willing to sign to the effect that I was prepared not to stop the subdivision of the large piece of land into the smaller canal blocks, they would allow me to use the title particulars of the large piece of land in order to satisfy the Shire. Now I had to convince the Shire to go along with that and with the pressure put on by the Port Geographe developers, we finally got our building permit and got started. The weekend before that we brought our boat over the

ocean following the coast line and into the canals and moored it on four long ropes into our own little harbour along the side of our block. I had already made up a wide gang plank to give me access to the boat from our canal wall so that I could use the galley on board the boat for my meals. Also as there was no electricity available yet to my power pole, I could use the on-board generator as my power supply.

Trevor had his apprenticeship transferred to a local builder so he could continue learning his trade as a roof carpenter down in Busselton. He had also just got his drivers license and he now had his own little car, for him to be able to get to work on his own.

What was often found in coastal areas was that there could be a silt layer below the surface. In the location of Port Geographe a silt layer was about three metres down. The developer had decided to ignore that as it would be very expensive to excavate the whole site and remove it. The result of that was that all the buildings had to be built on a grit of deep beam footings, three metres apart in both directions with heavy steel reinforcements. This would then provide a stable base to build on top of it without uneven settlement. The consulting engineer had provided all the detail plans for this. I found a backhoe operator with a one foot wide bucket to dig out all the trenches for me and another bloke with a three ton tip truck to cart the excavated material that was dug out of the trenches onto the adjoining three blocks to be spread out later. The ground was so hard that it would have been impossible to dig it by hand plus the time factor was important to me. All the reinforcements were pre-made to size and were already on site and Koos van de Kooy, my regular plumber from Forrestfield was going to do all the plumbing here with his son Ben helping him. Terry, Jeff and Kevin came over for the day to help me pour the footings and I organized a concrete overhead pump to place the concrete where it was needed. We started at six in the morning and by 9:15 am it was all in place. I took it on myself to do the compacting of the concrete with the vibrator which resulted in me being covered with a lot of cement splashes. We had put in a total of 75 cub metres of concrete and I must say that I was proud of my boys the way that they got stuck into it. The next day I started to put in the edge boarding all around for the edge of the concrete slab and to put in all the plastic pipe work for the vacuum system that was going to be installed later. I also had to make up the formwork for the sunken lift shaft base. Five days after pouring the concrete footings I was ready to pour the concrete slab and again the boys came over and with the help of the concrete pump to deliver the concrete to all the right places.

By the end of the day it just looked so good after the trowel machine had put a good finish to the top surface. The next day I was able to mark all the

walls on the slab and as I had already had the starter bars for the two concrete columns in place between the lounge and the dining room, I could now stand up the Hardy columns with the reinforcements inside and mix and pour the concrete into them. By the time this was all done the slab was cured and hardened enough for the bricks to be delivered and stacked on the slab and around it so that the bricklayers could make a start. I was lucky to get some good local brickies and I got them to do the front section of the house first as that part was going to carry the second storey. I know that bricklayers generally don't like to work on a curved wall as that takes too much time because there is no line to lay the bricks to, so I opted to do the curved wall of the semi-circular staircase myself.

While still living in Thornlie, I prepared a 5 meter high steel pipe pole with a horizontal swinging arm at exactly the length of the radius of the curve of the wall and that arm I could swing around and lay the bricks to the end of it and as the pole was perfectly plumb, the result would be that the curved wall would be perfectly plumb as well. Every time a full course of bricks was laid, I raised this arm for the next course of bricks. I contracted for a local formwork company to do all the concrete formwork while I would be doing the formwork for the semi circular staircase myself. In order to get all the steel reinforcement on the top of the form work, I built a ramp out of steel scaffolding tubes and planks, coming from the block next door so that I could walk all the steel bars on top of the deck as I needed them. Riet's brother John offered to give me a hand to fix and wire all the steel together with me. My plan was to make sure that the suspended slab was going to be poured before Christmas and at this stage we were on track.

We had an interesting interruption to our work schedule and that was the sinking of the HMAS SWAN near Dunsborough at 10:30 am on Sunday the 14th of December 1997. The Geographe Bay Artificial Reef Society was formed in 1995 for the purpose of lobbying for the relocation of the decommissioned destroyer HMAS SWAN as a dive wreck and artificial reef in Geographe Bay.

The sinking was to take place 1.3 nautical miles off Meelup Beach. Flags guaranteeing a front row boat viewing position could be pre-purchased for $100 from the Geographe Bay Artificial Reef Society and that was what I did as we were certainly going to take our Riviera cruiser out there to witness the event and with Trevor on board as well it promised to be a nice day. I got a good location for me to anchor our cruiser, because of the $100 flag, between the coast line and the Swan. The destroyer was floating where it was going to be blasted to sink it and I was anxious to witness it all. I even had my movie camera ready to record it. Then after waiting for the big bang, I started to film from the moment that the explosion was heard and immediately there was a



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lot of smoke drifting from the sinking destroyer towards us but we did not see anything and then when the smoke disappeared the old ship was gone. Because of the smoke we did not see it going down. What a bummer that was. All that I got on film was a lot of smoke. If I had realized at what direction the wind was I should have been on the other side of the Swan. Just the same it was a nice day out on the water.

As we got nearer to Christmas I could see that we would just make it and as Christmas was on the Thursday, my plan was to pour the suspended slab on the Wednesday. So my regular grano workers, my own boys, were organized and so was the concrete pump contractor and with a six o'clock start again we were on our way. A couple of weeks before this concrete pour, I finally got power to my own power pole and with the slab now in position, I did not need the use of the cruiser for meals and power and that worked out just right because the contractor that I had been able to get to put in the jetty for me was ready to do that in January and therefore I had to locate the boat somewhere else during that time. I now could afford to take a few days off for a short break over Christmas.

I made inquiries for hiring a hoist in order to get the bricks and mortar up onto the first floor slab but I was surprised to learn that they were all out on various jobs and there was a waiting list for them so I thought about buying a second hand one and then selling it when I was finished. It did not take long to locate one that was advertised in the West Australian and I went to Perth straight after New Year to pick it up and towed it back to Busselton behind my station wagon. While I was doing that the local scaffolding contractors put the



Side view of our home in Busselton

scaffold all around the newly poured suspended slab so that the brickies could carry on with their work as soon as I had the hoist in position for them to use.

When I was arranging for the jetty to be installed I also got them to put in two extra steel poles in the middle of our little harbour, about six metres away from the edge of the jetty, so that the cruiser could be moored and secured by four ropes between the two poles and edge of the jetty instead of just tied up hard against the side of the jetty. This way it was freely floating in the water without it banging against the jetty. Every morning I saw the sun come up on the east when I was already on the job and at night I did not leave until the sun had gone down in the west. They were long days but I did get a lot of work done and that was what I wanted. Again I did the upstairs semi-curved wall of the staircase while the brickies were doing the rest and when all the brick work was finished and the scaffold raised to suit the roof construction, Riet's brother John came over to help me with putting the roof on and whenever Trevor could, he would also join in to help.

For the roof cover I had selected the Bristile fully glazed terra cotta tiles which looked just great and being so close to the ocean it was the best choice for the area. Because of the stormy weather out there I made sure that the use of storm clips were well installed and of course I had strong holding down 10 mm galvanized ties, bricked in from the first brick course and connected to every second rafter all the way around. My roof was never going to be blown off.

When the whole house was covered over and it was time for the plasterers and the ceiling fixers to move in, I had my work planned to make a start on the two tiered retaining walls all the way around the waterfront about two metres



Our Riviera Cruiser: "Whatalife" along side our jetty

back from the canal wall and I decided to use the concrete post and panel method in a limestone colour to match the canal walls, similar to the type that I had used at the seven villa job in Palmyra. Starting with the lower retaining wall, which was going to be 900 mm high, I had to use concrete posts that were 1800 mm long and half of that had to be in the ground encased in concrete. That meant a lot of hard digging and lucky for me the weather was still good to work in. After work Trevor gave me a hand to lift the concrete panels in position as that was hard to do on my own. The second tier of the wall was 600 mm high and constructed the same way as the bottom one. It took me about a full month to do both levels of the retaining walls and construct the concrete base for the brick steps from the canal wall level to the upper level. By this time most of the wall plastering and the ceilings were done inside the house and I could make a start with the internal fixing like shelves and skirtings while Jeff had offered to come over and hang all the doors for me. I also had a major job ahead of me in doing the stair and landing balustrading all in Tasmanian Oak. All the vertical posts and balusters were turned by my son Paul on his wood lathe. At the same time the lift engineers, Grant Elevators, came on the job to install the hydraulic lift with the Tasmanian Oak wall panels for the lift cage that I had specially made up in South Australia.

Our new home had two bedrooms, two bath rooms and two separate toilets upstairs, while downstairs were the other two bedrooms, one elaborate inside bathroom and one separate inside toilet with adjoining powder room and outside there was a bathroom with shower and a separate toilet. These outside facilities were there for anybody to use who came off the boat with us on a swim and boat ride. It was also very tempting to go for a swim in the



Dean and Tam on the jet-ski with their son Riley.

canals. Five and half months after starting to build our home we decided to move in because of security reasons. There was evidence of break-ins and with expensive cupboards already being installed, it became a bit risky. Also the house was the only one in the area and nobody would notice if anything did happen. In the rear part of the home was a big games room that we used just as a place to do the cooking and eating with both fridge and freezer there and a small table for our meals. The ground floor bedrooms were used as such for the time being.

The good thing was that I did not have to drive to work any more. I was living on the job. Also when the hoist was not needed any more a few adverts in the paper found a buyer and I almost got the money back that I had paid for it before. When our home was finished internally I had the carpets put in just before Riet's birthday in early August and we had a chance to take it a bit easier from there on. Doing the gardens was next on the program and we now had a garden strip about four foot wide between the lower and the higher retaining walls which was calling for a lot of plants to be put in. I organized a local reticulation firm to put in the sprinkler system at the front and back of the house and then all what we needed was the roll on grass to complete it all.

Shortly before the completion of our home something exciting happened. On the 1st day of July 1998, Chris and Michelle were blessed with the birth of their first child and it was a DAUGHTER called Jacqueline Leslie. She was our first granddaughter and the first girl born in our family since we ourselves had got married back in 1959. We had been living in a boy's world all those years. We now had five grand children.

Towards the end of that year, being 1998, Paul and Denise announced that they wanted to get married and pinned it down to the 9th of July 1999 but with a difference. As her parents Lloyd and Jennifer Goodall lived on the South Island of New Zealand, Paul and Denise chose to get married at Vanuatu. It was a pity that some of our boys could not make it to this far away location but that did not change the fact that it was a lovely wedding in an amazing setting on the beach and the celebrant was the local Mayor. Their honeymoon suite was a well appointed cabin just off shore on stilts above the clear waters with steps leading down to the water giving them a chance to do their skinny dipping under their honeymoon suite, how romantic was that!

We spent about a full week there and Kevin and Jane were there too and of course Lloyd and Jennifer. Within the resort there was a nine hole golf course and so Paul, Kevin, Lloyd and myself had a game of golf. Now Lloyd was a good golfer and when we got to this particular hole, Lloyd's golf ball landed in the bunker next to the green and we noticed that Lloyd was a bit annoyed, so when he tried to hit it out, the ball went across the green into the bunker on the other side and he was not impressed. Now the trouble with Kevin was that he laughs easily at someone else's problems so when Lloyd tried to hit the ball out of the other bunker and it landed back into the first one, Kevin just could not stop laughing and that somehow aggravated Lloyd even more to the point that he just lost it. At the end it really was funny and that made the wedding even more memorable. No offence Lloyd.

It was time now to enjoy ourselves after all that hard work and what better way to do that now than on our Riviera cruiser. Many weekends we went out fishing as Trevor did enjoy doing that and at times some of the boys came over and we took them over to the diving site of the sunken Swan near Meelup Beach and hooked the boat on one of the moorings that were in place there and it was just spectacular according to the boys that went down to the dive wreck below. Over the years most of them had become experienced divers with the required diving permits. I also became a member of the Busselton Golf Club and started to play three times a week. This course was a very level course and it was enjoyable to play and I soon made some friends. One of the players that I got friendly with was Alistair Groat. We soon were invited to his place for a BBQ and met his wife Felicity and their friends Brian and Esme Nichols. Over the following many years, Brian and Esme became our long time friends and a number of times we went on holidays together and many times we had fun on our jet ski which we would then take out to the beach and spend all day riding the waves like silly buggers. We really started to settle down to a holiday life style in Busselton and often one of our boys would bring their family down for the weekend and in the process make good use of

the jet ski and the cruiser as well. With all the villas and units now sold and settled I was living very comfortably with no money worries at all.

Then during 1999 we had some more additions to our grand-children tally. On the 9th of June Chris and Michelle had their second child. A boy this time and he was named Jake Robert. I think they call that a perfect pair. We just said: “Well done Chris and Michelle”. You would nearly think that there was a race on in the baby department because four days later Dean and Tam got their second son on the 13th of June and he was named Kealen Hardy. That brought the tally of grand-children up to 7 now. We considered that with all these boys with an Oorschot surname, that name was never going to fade out particularly as my own brothers were also contributing to the Oorschot named population here in Western Australia.

Dean was getting restless at his job as a chef at the Sail and Anchor in Fremantle. He had been working hard with no prospects for promotion and he was looking for an improvement of his income for his growing family. They both felt that the time was right to be looking for their own place to run but the question was where? They started to realize that they had to look at a country location to be able to set themselves up to have their own restaurant. Then through some channels in the culinary industry he learnt that a restaurant in Mount Barker was up for sale so Dean and Tam went down there to talk to the owner who was running the restaurant himself. He was interested to sell the business but Dean and Tam would have to lease the building. When they found out that the price was quite steep they had second thoughts about it but still considered the idea of having their own restaurant. In the end they made enquiries with the bank and the result was that the bank knocked them back. Probably because the guy was just too greedy and asking too much for what the real value was. A bit later there was one that came on the market in Albany in Frederick Street called “Rustlers Steak House”. Compared with the one in Mount Barker, this one was a much better proposition with the population of Albany also a lot bigger than Mount Barker. The deal was the same as the other one meaning leasing the building and buying the restaurant as a going concern. Their approach to the bank this time was a lot better and in making some arrangements they got their approval and made plans for their take-over date of the restaurant and shift to Albany into a rental home in Hale Road. This eventuated in the middle of September 1999. They were obviously very excited as this was going to be the beginning of a new way of life for them. Up until now Tam had stayed home with the two little ones but now in their own restaurant, Tam was keen to be involved herself, so with the help of regular baby-sitters they made it possible to work together in the restaurant. With Dean’s skill as a chef and his personality and with Tam’s easy way of getting



On Trevor and Lisa's wedding day: Kevin, Jeff, Paul, Trevor, Dean and Chris with us and Terry sitting down.

on with people, they soon had the restaurant up and running and their future looked very promising. All this was happening in the latter part of 1999 and into the year 2000.

Talking about the latter part of 1999 and in particular the 17th of October, it was our fortieth wedding anniversary. Now you know already that I like surprises and on this occasion I wanted to spring a surprise on Riet. I told her that I had arranged a dinner with our friends Alistair, Felicity, Brian and Esme at the Broadwater Resort. Unbeknownst to her I had however hired their function room and organized a dinner for nearly fifty people. The six of us were sitting in the bar area just having a drink before dinner, when all the other family members from both sides and our own kids turned up as a group in one hit. I had arranged for this to happen this way and you should have seen Riet's reaction to this overwhelming surprise. Of course our four local friends were well aware of what I had been planning and enjoyed the secrecy of it all. After all the hugging and kissing we moved into the function room and had drinks first, followed by a great dinner.

Then I had another surprise and this was for everybody that was at the dinner table. Most of the guests were family that had been at our own wedding back in 1959. I have told you that at that time a friend of mine had made a film of our wedding on standard eight film and given that to us as a wedding present. Nobody knew that I was able to convert this film onto a VHS tape and I organized for a large TV and recorder to be available in one corner of

the function room. Both parents on either side had passed away since then and to see them on this TV was very emotional to most of us, which made the showing of this tape very special. One week later we were at the official opening of Dean's and Tam's restaurant in Albany and that was an important event in their life and we were and are still very proud parents of those two.

Talking about the year 2000, it was the year that Kevin and Jane decided to sell their home in Connelly. Ever since I have known them and particularly Jane, I have seen her spending a lot of her evenings studying. Even when I was spending time with them when I was building their home, she was often lying on the floor doing her studies. She was very persistent with that and that resulted in her graduating from University with a double major in Human Resources and Industrial Relations in 1997. Clever girl and I admire her for that. After selling their home in April, they embarked on a traveling holiday for six months through Australia and then into Queensland and settled down in Townsville where they bought a typical Queenslander on stilts at 99 Eyre Street and spent the next number of years improving it into what is now a beautiful home. In the backyard Kevin also built a very elaborate workshop and computer room. It is from this home that Kevin was and still is running a very successful sign-writing business.

Terry and Jeff were doing well with their show home and got many building contracts as a result of that over the years to the point that they decided to have a second show home in the same area. They built a double storey show home in Nolan Avenue just of Warton Road almost opposite the Gosnells Golf Club entrance. It turned out to be a great success as they got a lot of up market homes to build as a result of it. As a parent and a retired builder myself, it made us proud of their achievements.

Trevor had finished his apprenticeship with the local builder in Busselton and was now working as a tradesman for various builders around the place and at the same time he was noticed by the local girls, as he was not a bad looker, as the girls did describe him. There was one in particular that was doing more than just noticing him and that was Lisa Emery and she worked in the shopping center as a check-out girl. She was the oldest daughter of Steven and Ann Emery who had their own car service shop in Busselton. They soon hit it off and announced their engagement. Then with that sort of commitment, they wanted to buy a block of land and build their own home and so I put some of my time into looking for a suitable block and when a design was selected we both worked on building their home. His Mum thought that it would have been nicer if Trevor had stayed home a bit longer, but the young couple was keen to live together in their own (and the banks) home and that was that.



The HMS Pandora

They were happy and that was all important. They moved in before Trevor's twenty first birthday. It was always Trevor's intention to eventually work for himself as a roofing contractor and when the work ran out with the builders that he had been working for, he made that step to set himself up with a tool trailer and all sorts of equipment. The only thing was that he now had to compete with the established gangs of roofing contractors, who had their contacts with the building supervisors and they were the ones that dished out the work to their subcontractors. Trevor being new and also very young found it hard to get a continuity of work. As a result of that, he was often home for a week or more between jobs, and that was hard when you had to pay a mortgage. He ended up getting work in Margaret River but that was a long drive every day and costly on petrol but it was work and he needed that. With Kevin's birthday coming up on the 24th of May in 2002, we thought to spend some time with him and Jane, so a few days before that we flew over and had a good time there.

Kevin and I went to the golf course and played a good game of golf. At night we had dinner at a fancy restaurant and had a good look around Townsville along the Strand at the ocean foreshore. That had been done up very well and it attracted a lot of tourists. An interesting view over Townsville was enjoyed from the top of Castle Rock. One day the four of us paid a visit to the Maritime Museum which was worth the visit and then as we left we



The HMS Victory

walked through the gift shop and we saw a lot of interesting items on display. We were half-way back to the car when I said that I wanted to go back to look at something that caught my attention when we had walked out of there. So when I got back in there I had a good look at a large box that contained all the parts and raw materials to build a model of a boat. It was the Pandora. I bought it and had every intention to build it, once we got home. The others were quite surprised when they saw me carting this box along and they sort of said, we saw you looking at that before, are you sure that you want to build that and my answer was: “Yes”.

The HMS Pandora was a three mast 24 gun Porcupine-class sixth rate ship of the Royal Navy. She is best known as the ship sent in 1790, under Captain Edward Edwards, to search for the HMS Bounty and the mutineers who had taken her. The Pandora was wrecked on the return voyage in 1791 on the north east coast of Queensland. When we got home I made a start on building the Pandora, which was a very tedious job, having to work with strips of wood measuring 6mm x 2mm in size, bending, shaping and gluing the hull, but six months later it was completed and I even now enjoy looking at it. It is covered with a clear glass cover to keep the fly droppings and spider webs off it. The boys and also Riet must have been impressed with the final result of the Pandora, because for my birthday in April 2003, they jointly gave me another



The four of us in Port Arthur, Tasmania.

one to tackle and that was the HMS Victory. I will talk about this one at a later date.

We were getting restless a bit and we wanted to do something different and somehow we saw an advertisement about the Indian Pacific rail trip from Perth to Sydney. After making enquiries we found out that it could be coupled with a train trip from Sydney to Cairns. The last time that I had been in a train was back in Holland after the war. We thought that this could be interesting so we booked it and boarded the train in East Perth. That would have been in the middle of 2003. Our cabin on the train was what they called a sleeper cabin. It was a double decker whereby the top bed was folded away to the wall of the cabin allowing you to sit on the lower bed during the day. It also had its own bathroom facilities which consisted of a small cubical with a fold away toilet and basin and that way giving you enough space to have a shower. It was all very cramped but it surely was different. There was a dining car where we had all our meals and there was also a lounge car where you would spend most of the day talking and even playing cards and watching the country side move past.

When we got past Kalgoorlie and moved across the Nullarbor, we struck trouble. It had been raining quite a lot and the country in this part was pretty well flooded to the point that the locomotive, which was pulling the train, was losing traction on the railway lines and as a result of that, it was moving along very slowly. As the train was bound by a time schedule, it had to be in Sydney by a certain date. So in order to improve the speed of the train, an



I got caught with my head in the "Stocks" at the Penny Royal.

extra locomotive was dispatched from Peterborough to be hooked onto our train. It did make some difference but to pick up the lost time was impossible so they decided not to call in at Adelaide and transported passengers to and from Adelaide by coach to Peterborough and we were on the way to Sydney. We spent a few nights there and then boarded the train that would eventually take us to Cairns. In the process the temperature started to rise, as we were travelling north, but that was to be expected. We did some sightseeing along the way and it was interesting to see the enormous stretches of sugar cane fields from Townsville right up to Cairns. We spent two days in Cairns and then flew home after having found out what it was like to travel by train. As they say: "A change is as good as a holiday".

Trevor was still having a hard time getting regular work in Busselton and in talking to his brothers in Perth, he realized that if he was living in Perth he would soon be busy in his trade as a roofing carpenter. So he decided that was the best thing for him to do and he put his home in Busselton on the market and made the move to Perth by about September 2003. He rented a house in East Victoria Park and Lisa got a job with the insurance company QBE. It did not take long for Trevor to be working full time doing roofs and he never looked back, proving that the move to Perth was the right one for him.

During the year 2004 a lot of things were happening. Some of them were good but some of them were pretty bad. My brother Frank, who had

been working in the saddle making industry from early years after finishing school, set up his own business in the Bullsbrook area. From 1997 he suffered from kidney cancer and went through a lot of treatments to try and beat this. Because of these treatments he won an extra 7 years to fulfill his dreams and spend time with the ones who loved and respected him. The disease got him in the end and he passed away on the 15th of March in 2004 with his wife Ellie and their children by his side.

In Albany Dean and Tam were going great guns in their Rustlers Steak House and then they had a windfall. With that I mean that because of the situation in Zimbabwe going from bad to worse, Tam's parents decided, more or less for their own safety, to come over to Albany and settle there with Dean and Tam for good. This meant that they now became their permanent baby-sitters for Riley and Kealen and there was no need to hire baby-sitters any more. Alan and Judy arrived here on the 21st of June 2004 and very quickly settled down in their own place not far from Dean and Tam's home. It was only about one year before, that Dean and Tam had bought a country property on four acre of bush land in the Little Grove Area just outside of Albany.

Paul and Denise finished building their elaborate home in the year 2000 and started to enjoy living in better surroundings as they carried on improving the outside of their property by building a nice swimming pool with a waterfall rockery. Paul saw a hole in a particular market and that market was the timber decking industry. With a friend in May 2003 he started his timber decking company and soon got involved in doing all sorts of decking jobs to new and established homes all around Perth. After a while he decided to part with this fellow and continue on his own and he was then even doing better than before. There was something else that he was good at. On the 14th of August 2004 Paul and Denise were blessed with a son and he was named Dylan Antony. During all these activities Denise kept up her studies and then in 2007 she completed her business degree, majoring in Finance. Well done Denise.

On Sunday the 5th of September 2004 I got a telephone call from my brother Theo giving me some really bad news. My brother John had had a massive heart attack the night before and passed away almost immediately. If ever something came unexpectedly, this certainly was it. I could not believe this. With Frank we had seen it coming for a while but with John it was a hell of a shock to the system. No goodbye's at all and it was very hard for Riekie to come to terms with this. We had been working together for many years building all those multi-storey jobs around Perth and now all of a sudden he was gone.

It was a couple of years back that Trevor and Lisa had got engaged. They had not set a wedding date at that time, but once that they were well and truly settled down in Perth and knew that things were going in the right direction work-wise, they made it known to both the families that they wanted to get married and set a date of 23rd of October 2004 and it was going to be in Busselton. Bridal party photos were made on our semi circular Tasmanian Oak staircase with all of our boys present as well. The old stone Church in Busselton was well attended by both sides of the family as well as many friends and the wedding ceremony was carried out by the Reverend in a lovely way and at the end he declared the newly weds to be now husband and wife. The reception was held at the Abbey Resort along the Bussell Highway, a place where Trevor before worked putting on the roof construction.

I mentioned before in 2003 about my birthday present that I received from Riet and the boys and I am talking about the Victory model. I started to work on it soon after receiving it and I realized that it was going to be a massive job as there were so many intricate details to work on with the 104 canons amongst the many items that took a lot of time to assemble. As before Riet did the sewing of the sails and I finally completed the Victory in 2005. It has now a large clear plastic cover over it as it stands on a specially purchased low table. While I was building the Victory, in my mind I went back to 1994 when we saw it in all its glory in Portsmouth in the south of England.

With our friends Brian and Esme Nichols we decided to go on a two week holiday to Tasmania and we planned that for November 2005. We flew to Launceston, via Melbourne, and hired a car there in order to drive ourselves around the island. We were planning to go around clockwise so we first went to Lilydale where we climbed a lookout tower outside the township. We were even able to look west and see the Tamar River in the distance. Following the main road going east driving through Scottsdale, we called in at a pub in Derby as Brian needed a beer. We all had one and then we noticed that there was a wall full with all sorts of crude jokes in this pub and I think that was more or less the additional attraction of this pub. We then landed at St. Helens at the Tasman Sea on the east coast and travelling south we stayed the night at Bicheno. Our next stop was going to be Port Arthur. On a previous Tasmanian holiday back in 1986, Riet and I had been there before but since this terrible massacre on the 28th of April 1996, there had been a lot of changes. Port Arthur had been a penal colony for many years in its early history and the old large jail house, or I should say, what was left of it now, still gave you the creeps when you walked through it. One man, on his own, did the killing of 35 people and wounded 21 more all in a matter of a few hours. I remembered at that time that the whole of Australia was in shock.

We stayed the night in Sorell after enjoying our dinner at the English pub nearby. We wanted to be in Hobart fairly early the next morning as it was a Saturday and we knew that the Salamanca Markets were always a good attraction and worthwhile visiting. They often say that the world is a small place, well when we were walking around the markets we met Jim and Maureen, people we knew from Port Geographe in Busselton. Amongst other things Hobart is famous for the yearly big yacht race from Sydney to Hobart around Christmas time every year. We spent some time there before going further south and we went as far as Southport. As we wanted to travel to Queenstown we had to go back through Hobart in order to find our way through Hamilton and Derwent Bridge. From there on the country was very barren right up to Queenstown where we stayed for the night. The following morning we went to Strahan and enjoyed the lookout over the Southern Ocean which was very pretty. The next place we wanted to visit was Cradle Mountain as Kevin talked about that because during his honeymoon he went there. You had to do a fair amount of walking and that was not for us so we moved on to Burnie and through to Stanley. It was very interesting as it was on a high hill with good views over Bass Strait. They told us that it would be nice to drive over to Arthur River via Smithton and Marawah and when we got there we agreed that it was worth the effort.

My brother Bert was living in the country just outside of Sheffield and we really wanted to call in and see him and his wife Sue. As we came through Sheffield we just had to stop and admire all those murals painted on the walls in the main street. It was quite a surprise as we were not aware of their existence. It was nice to catch up with Bert because the last time that we had seen him was when he was living in Esperance on the south coast of W.A. Our holiday was nearing its end but we intended to spend some time in Launceston and in particular at the Penny Royal where we were booked to stay the night at the Leisure Inn Penny Royal Hotel. If you ever go to Tasmania and in particular to Launceston, than you must visit the Penny Royal. It is like a small theme park and the cable car across the Cataract Gorge is just something else. We concluded our Tassie holiday with a visit to a seahorse aquarium which was located on the western side of the Derwent River just north of Launceston before boarding our flight back to Perth. We had a great time with Brian and Esme and we had a lot of fun and laughs as we went around the island. Riet was starting to have trouble with her back and her hips and after X-rays it was revealed that on her hip joints it was becoming a bone on bone situation that was causing her to suffer a lot of pain. Often I found her sitting on the edge of her bed crying her eyes out and then I felt so hopeless because there was nothing that I could do to relieve her pain. At the end after a number of visits

to the specialists and then to the orthopedic surgeon Dr. Chong in Bunbury, she was booked in for early April in 2006 in the Saint John of God hospital in Bunbury for her right hip replacement.

CLUB 8 - That is what Kevin called it. In his mind he wanted to increase the bond between our seven boys and me by creating this club. He even had shirts made for all of us with the "Club 8" logo on it. It was a really nice idea and following on with this we planned to have a boy's holiday together. After some investigating and enquiries a decision was made to spend a full week on a house-boat in Mildura on the Murray River north of Melbourne in Victoria. Towards the end of 2005 he made the booking for the last week of March 2006.

That worked out all right as we would be back from Mildura before Riet was to be taken to the hospital in Bunbury for her hip operation. So we all left together for the flight to Melbourne where we were to meet up with Kevin before boarding a local flight to Mildura. Two taxies took us to the Murray River where the house-boat was waiting for us to take possession of it after being shown the ropes on how to handle her. The next thing was to go shopping. To kick off we all put in equal amounts of money for our daily requirements and I was amazed that more money was spent on all sorts of grog than food, although they bought plenty of food just the same. Two taxies brought us back to the house-boat with both their boots being fully loaded. It promised to become a wild week on the river with lots of fun and games.

After a boozy evening and a good night's sleep we took to the river the next morning. The house boat was fitted with two outboard motors and the hull was rectangular in shape. The instructions were that when you were ready to moor the boat, you just drive it slowly square on into the bank of the river and then secure a rope on either side from the back of the boat to a tree stump or something on shore to keep the house-boat in place. In most cases the front of the boat would be about one meter short from the bank of the river and the water between the shore and the boat would be only one foot deep.

On the second day in the afternoon we decided to stop for the day and after landing the boat and securing it Jeff jumped from the front of the boat in the about one foot deep water and then screamed very loud: "I have broken my leg". Nobody believed him much because he was always fooling around and kidding everybody, but it was soon realized that this time he was dinkum. There were two beds near the front part of the boat and his brothers got him onto that and then using their mobiles called for an ambulance to call in and check him out. The ambos soon got him comfortable with pain killers and put a splint very tight around the broken leg to hold it together. Next was to get him off the boat and into the ambulance and to the hospital in Mildura. Once the ambulance was on his way we decided to return to Mildura ourselves and



The Dawn Princess in Darwin with Riet looking on.

await there for the outcome of how Jeff was at the hospital. This accident was the last thing that we had expected. Jeff was operated on the same night but kept in hospital overnight. We found out the next day that both the fibula and the shin bone had broken and that was unusual, they said. In the afternoon we were able to pick him up, with his leg fully in plaster and he was able to move around with the aid of crutches. Jeff insisted on continuing with our planned river trip and after getting him back on board, we just did that. Jeff, now being on strong medication, was prevented from participating in the boozing but that was just the way it was.

There was one interesting event that was worth mentioning and that was when we went through a lock in the river. There was one just west of Mildura and it was amazing to be in the lock and then experience the boat rising and falling with the changing of the water levels in the lock. Really a masterpiece of engineering that was. Jeff was coping well with his predicament and he had to return to the hospital on the day of flying back to Perth as they had to cut the plaster cast around his leg, so that he could fly. If his leg swelled due to the high altitude then the cast could expand because of it being cut. They even used a forklift to get him out of the small plane coming back from Mildura as he could not walk down the steps himself. Hazel was all worried when she was waiting for him in Perth and the instructions were to take him straight to the hospital.



This was seen from the cable car we were sitting in.

Talking about hospital, that is where I took Riet a few days later to have her hip replacement operation in Bunbury. The anaesthetist according to Riet was a nice young man, his name being Tim, and he explained to her that when they do the operation it is like a carpenter's shop, so he assured her that he would make sure that she could not hear a thing at all during the operation. I was with her when she woke up back in the two bedroom ward and she said that she was feeling OK. After a few days they got her to start walking with crutches and then one day guess who turned up? Jeff and Hazel with Jeff in a wheel chair and he also had his crutches with him so he suggested that they should have a race between them on crutches there and then. It was good to see them after the Mildura accident. Hazel told us then that the doctors in Mildura had not done such a good job and here in the Murdoch hospital they had to re-set the bones to correct it. The scar just under Riet's hip was about 20 cm long and after one week it started to get infected and they had to open it in order to clean it up. That meant a set back and in the end Riet spent nearly three weeks in hospital before she was allowed home. I was pleased that when I was working on the design of our double storey home in Busselton, that I had had the foresight to put in this lift so that Riet could use it to go upstairs.

There were a few things that we were not able to do from here on. The first thing was our jet ski. There was no way that Riet now could get her leg over in order to get on the jet ski, so I decided to sell it locally. The other problem was our Riviera cruiser. Riet would find it very risky and difficult to climb on board

as she had to step up in order to do that. It was always a job for two people to bring the boat back in, me at the controls on the top deck and the other person grabbing the ropes out of the water to hook them on the moorings. The last year that I had the cruiser I had done a total of 10 hours on the clock and of that it was 3 hours going to Bunbury and back in order to do the cleaning of the hull and the anti-fowling on the dry dock there. On that trip Brian came along and gave me a hand to do it. I worked out that 7 hours for a whole year was not good for the Cummings diesel motors as I was told that they would start to glaze up and you could see that too because when I started the engines they would smoke a hell of a lot. So with the high cost of maintenance and insurance, I was not getting good value for the little use of it so she just had to go too. It had been good fun for about ten years but our situation had changed.

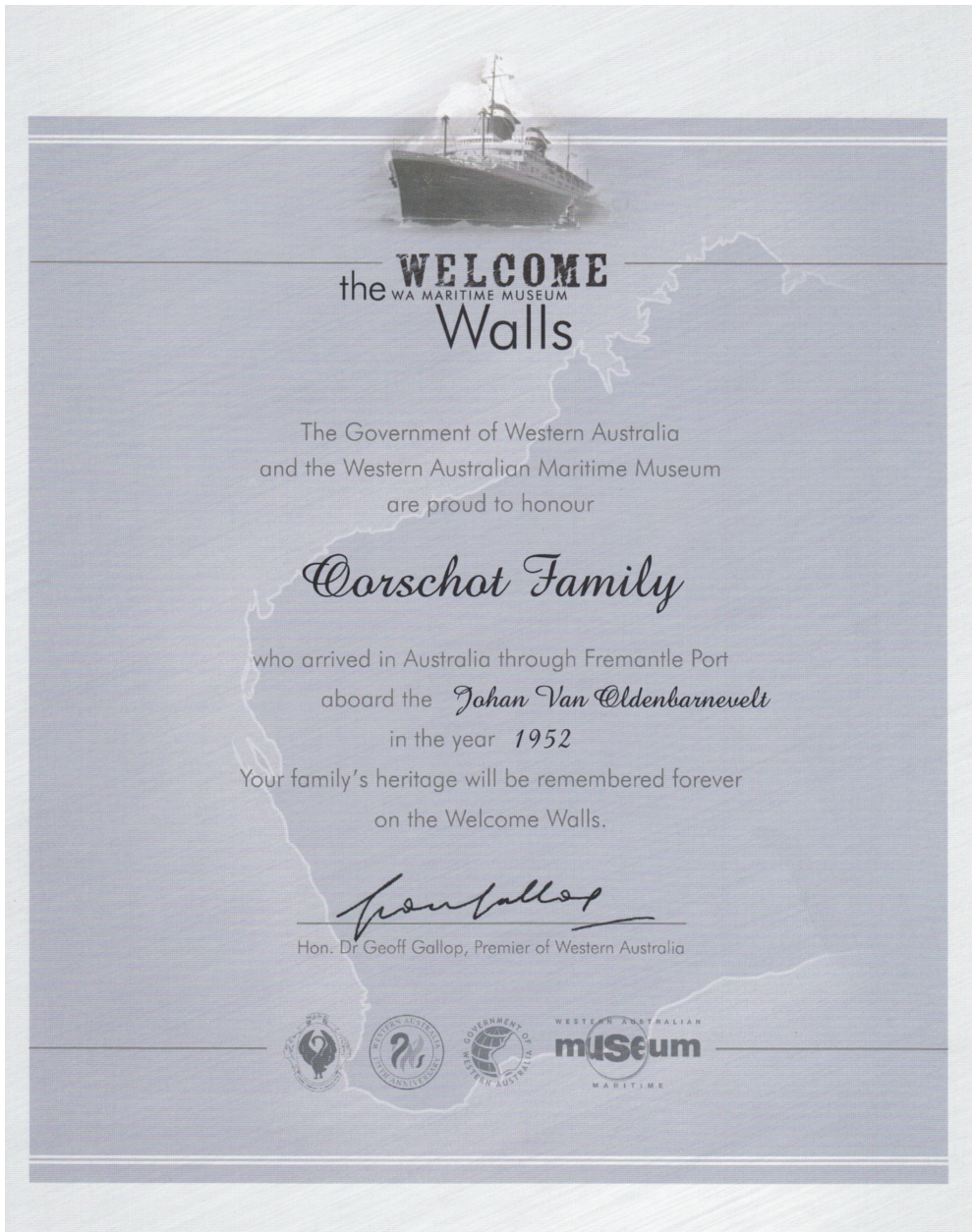
About a year before I had seen a full page in the West Australian newspaper enlighting the public about the Welcome Walls in Fremantle at the Maritime Museum on Victoria Quay. Some time before they had erected Stage One of the walls with many names of migrants that had entered Western Australia through the port of Fremantle. The purpose of this full page in the paper was, to give any migrants that had not registered their names in the past, to do so on the second stage of the walls. It certainly aroused my interest and I suppose being the oldest Oorschot alive, I thought that I should make sure that our arrival back in 1952 got acknowledged on these Welcome Walls.

So I filled in the form with all the family details and the name of the ship that brought us at that time and paid the required fee. Then one week before I went on our Mildura house-boat holiday we received notification that the official unveiling of the second stage of the Welcome Walls was going to take place on Saturday the 27th of May of that year being 2006. As we were inscribed on the wall we received an official invitation to be present at the unveiling and we decided that we just had to be there. Although Riet was still walking with the aid of crutches, we made sure that we were there at the requested time. We were amazed at the large amount of people that were there. Because Riet was moving along on crutches, we were allowed to by-pass the long queue and got a seat near the front. Basil Zempalis, the Channel 7 sports presenter, was the host for this event and he even remarked on the fact that his family was amongst the migrants that came to Western Australia like all those on these Welcome Walls. Afterwards we had a look at the Walls and were able to locate our name on it.

Through these Welcome Walls the State of Western Australia is paying tribute to those migrants from many lands and cultures who have played such a huge role in the State’s social, economic and cultural development. The

'Welcome Walls', a new attraction at the Maritime Museum, is a lasting tribute to the significant contributions that migrants have made to Western Australia.

When August came around Riet went in for her second hip replacement operation in Bunbury and this time there were no infections and she was back home after nine days and back on crutches. There was one thing clear now and that was that this house was too big for her to keep clean and, as she always loved gardening, that was going to be hard for her as well so we decided that it was time to downgrade to a smaller home and to put our double story home



on the market. We expected it to sell quickly as the real estate agent reckoned that it would, so we started to look at smaller homes in Busselton for a while in anticipation of a quick sale but nothing happened. Then we did get an offer on our home but with a subject sale attached to it, but after many months of waiting, that finally fell through.

On the 10th of May 2007 at 10 o'clock at night we got a telephone call from our oldest son Terry with a shocking message that Jeff had been involved in a motor bike accident. He was in the Royal Perth Hospital in the intensive care unit and it sounded not good at all. Hazel was very worried for Jeff and asked us to come over as soon as possible. Early the next morning we were at his bedside and seeing him laying there with all those tubes out of his mouth and connected to all sorts of equipment, it was a frightening sight. We were prepared for the worst. We spent all day as they were monitoring him. Apparently he had built up a lot of pressure on the brain and that was life threatening besides all his other many injuries. By late in the afternoon we were told that somehow this pressure needed to be reduced if he was to have any chance to survive. The specialist explained that they had three options and they were::

Wait and see if it would go down by itself, but that was very risky as a brain bleed could occur, Administer medication that could decrease the swelling and pressure but that also could be fatal, Operate now immediately and cut and lift part of the skull to allow the swelling more space to settle down.

The specialist asked us, Hazel, Riet and I to make a decision as he would otherwise be knocking off for the day and then nothing could be done until the next morning.

The three of us soon came to the conclusion that the third option was the one to go for if Jeff was going to have any chance of survival and Hazel told him so. By seven o'clock that evening Jeff was in the operating theater and they cut and lifted the front half of his skull and in doing so they were able to greatly reduce the pressure on his brain. We did not see him until the next morning when he was brought back into the intensive care unit.

We stayed in Perth for a full week waiting for him to regain consciousness but that did not happen. He just laid there without any movement at all. We were told that he was in a coma and it was impossible to tell how long that he would stay in that condition. All the boys were around to give Hazel and ourselves all the support we could ask for but it was still hard to believe that this had happened.

We soon learned that the accident happened on a T-junction of the Tonkin Highway and Forrest Road west of Armadale. The young man that caused the accident entered the Tonkin Highway, towing his trailer behind him, without giving way to any traffic coming from the right and in doing so got in the way

of Jeff coming from the right with the resulting collision. This split second wrong decision caused an accident that never should have happened and now we all had to live with the terrible consequences.

We kept on travelling back to Perth every weekend and after about six weeks he started to show some life by opening his eyes. His head still had a protective bandage around it as there was no skull there to protect his brains. The piece of skull that was taken off could only be kept for about eight weeks so they fitted is back in place but that lasted only for a short time as an infection set in and they had to remove it. All this resulted in a lot of cutting and stitching of the skin over his head, knowing that when the time would be right, they would be cutting the skin again in order to fit a titanium plate in the place where they had cut away part of the skull in the first place. The big question remained at this stage: "Would he survive with permanent brain damage"? After about three months he was transferred to the Shenton Park Rehabilitation Center where they worked on getting him to improve his mobility and his brain capacity. It was now very obvious that he would never work again and that his mental capacity would never come back to normal again. Poor Jeff, poor Hazel, they did not deserve this.

Somewhere on the line I made a decision to start writing a book about my life as I came to the conclusion that my, and I should really say, our life had not been a dull one. For our kid's sakes and also our grandchildren, I should document what happened over the years starting back in Holland. It was Paul and Denise, on one of their visits to Busselton, when I was reminiscing about the past that they had sown the seed for this decision. So I made a start on my computer after the time that Riet had her hip operations and did about sixty pages and then for some inexplicable reason I just did not continue with it. It was when Kevin paid us a visit in December 2010 that somehow he got me motivated to carry on with it and from there on I have been working on it at a slow pace but I am now nearing the completion of my and our story.

Trevor and Lisa moved to another rental home in Maddington and while living there they bought a block of land in a new area of High Wycombe and soon thereafter they got Terry to build their new four bedroom, two bathroom home. Then at a luncheon function at the Tide Restaurant in Busselton for both the sets of parents they made it known to us that they were expecting their first baby. Lily Marguerite was born on the 23rd of November 2008 and that made her our ninth grandchild and our second granddaughter. Well done Trevor and Lisa. Jeff was eventually released from Shenton Park Rehabilitation center and was living at home being cared for by Hazel and professional carers while awaiting the court trial in due course.

I had been playing golf now at the Busselton Golf club for many years since completing our home on the canals at 47 Keel Retreat and I must say that I had enjoyed it a lot also meeting and playing with the regular guys three times a week. The course was a very level course so it was easy to walk but even before Lily was born I was getting really tired and I noticed that my feet and ankles were swollen quite a bit. On my regular visit to the doctors, as I am on warfarin tablets and my blood needed checking on a monthly basis, I mentioned to him about my swollen feet and ankles.

This doctor said to me: “Well you are 76 years old and you cannot expect your kidneys to work one hundred percent any more, learn to live with it”, and did not even look at my ankles. Six months later when I was back at his surgery, I again mentioned my swollen feet and ankles and then he put his hand to the side of my ankle and said: “Well there is flow there”. He then told me to get an X-ray taken of my chest at the Busselton hospital and come back with the prints to see him again.

I thought why my chest, I am worried about my swollen ankles. Anyway I came back with the chest X-rays which he put on this wall box with lights inside of it. When switching on the lights and looking at what the X-ray revealed, he said: “Uh, Uh”. I said: “What’s up”? He then said: “Your heart has enlarged by one and a half time”. My question was: “Why”? And he said that because now my heart had to pump blood as well as fluid, it had to work harder and therefore the heart muscle had stretched with the result of a larger heart. It also meant that my heart was now weaker and therefore I would tire easily and that is what I had noticed on the golf course. With that explanation from this bloody doctor I blew my top and said to him: “Why the fuck didn’t you do something about it in the first place when I told you about the fluid in my ankles”?

And with that I switched to another doctor in the same surgery, but the damage was done. The doctor that I switched to was one that I occasionally had played golf with, John Robberts, and he put me immediately on frusemide tablets to help drain fluid out of my system. Also as I had been a diabetic since the year 2000 on medication, which had regularly been increased as time went on, he put me on insulin at the same time.

With a weaker heart I did not want to walk the golf course any more and I looked into the possibility of buying a little golf buggy that you can sit on. There was one that was advertised locally but it was very rusty and I saw that I would be buying trouble. So I stopped playing golf at this stage.

Nothing was happening with the sale of our home and I was getting jacked off at the fact that the occasional home opens were only 45 minutes long.

I made the suggestion to the real estate agent that I was quite happy to do the home opens for him in order to attract more people to the house, as I had proven so often that you do get results from home opens. He was happy with that as he was at his wits end what to do himself. After doing this for about six months we did get someone from the Mandurah area that was showing an interest and, as per our arrangement, I passed his name to the agent and he followed it up with the result that an offer came forward that after some negotiating became an unconditional cash offer by August 2009. One Year before that we had made an important decision and that was that upon selling our home, we were going to move back to Perth. There were two reasons for that. If something was going to happen to one of us, then the five of our boys that lived in and around Perth, were not that far away. The other reason was that when living in Perth we would see our grandchildren a lot more, which would be very nice.

With the settlement planned for the end of October we went to Perth on the following Saturday after consulting the Sunday Times for possible homes for sales. We already had our sights on the newer area beyond Thornlie called Forrest Lakes and after spending some time with various agents we ended up with what we felt was just the right one for us and that was behind the Forrest Lakes shopping center towards the Canning Vale area. It was only three years old and settlement was to take place simultaneously with the settlement of our Busselton home.

We were both very happy with the outcome of our buying visit to Perth and drove home back to Busselton with the knowledge that now we knew what was ahead of us. For the last couple of years we had been saving all the empty boxes and now Riet started to pack a lot of stuff ahead of the move to Perth which was now pinpointed to Monday 26th of October. Before that there were a couple of important dates. Our fiftieth wedding anniversary was on Saturday the 17th October 2009 and the boys had arranged a lunch for the whole family in a restaurant in Armadale on the following day that was on the 18th and that turned out to be a lovely day with the whole family, including all the grandkids, even Kevin came over from Townsville. That was followed with Dean’s 40th birthday, which was postponed from his actual birthday of the 16th October to the following week on the 24th October. The whole family was then in Albany and while Kevin was in the west, he stayed for this party as well. We were there as well although our move to Perth was all organized with the furniture removal company to take place on Tuesday the 27th October. It was a very hectic time and we both were absolutely buggered at the end of it.

We both had our work cut out over the next couple of months. Me putting up a shed (A man has to have a shed) and doing additional brick paving at the



Riet with Brian and Esme in one of the bar lounges.

back and shelving inside some of the cupboards and Riet getting the house in order, emptying boxes and making good use of the many store cupboards around the house. The garden was a mess so I managed to get a landscape contractor to put in new lawns front and back. I was also keen to get back into golfing, knowing that I needed a golf buggy as I could not possibly walk the golf course anymore. Through the Quokka I bought a good second hand one, one that you could sit on and then Terry and I built a custom made trailer in Terry's workshop. In early January I joined Theo and my brother Bert, who had come back from Tasmania two years before, at Pickering Brook Golf Club for my first game of golf back in Perth. Pickering Brook lasted only a few weeks as I was just not happy playing on a "gravel pit" and putting on sand greens. I still wanted to play golf so I called in at the Gosnells Golf Club and after a talk, became a member. I was able to putt on a lovely grassy green and I was happy.

When we had received an unconditional offer on our house back in August last year, we booked ourselves on a cruise to New Zealand for two weeks as from the 10th of January. We flew to Melbourne where we boarded the Dawn Princess and then sailed to the South Island of New Zealand. We saw some amazing scenery there and when we travelled up the east coast we called in at Dunedin where we met up with Dorothy Oorschot who was an Associate Professor of Medicine there at the University where she was teach-



With Dean and Tam on the Lido Deck of the Dawn Princess.

ing. She was one of the twin sisters of my brother Theo and his wife Lenie. It was just great to catch up with her. Travelling along the east coast we called in at Christchurch, Wellington and then further up along the North Island in Napier where we visited a winery and bought a few bottles of wine for private use on board. We called in at Auckland before traveling back to Melbourne. It was a very relaxing cruise on the Dawn Princess and after all the tension of selling our home and the move back to Perth it was most enjoyable. It was so good that while we were on board we booked another one on the same ship for September of the same year to do a trip around Australia and Bali starting from Sydney. Our philosophy was to do it while we could.

When we were home trying to settle down to a routine, we received a message about Jeff. Jeff ’s court case was coming up on Monday the 10th of May 2010 in the Armadale Court building. It was going to be a three day trial and at the end of it the Magistrate ruled that the young man that caused the collision was found 100% guilty. Hazel as well as we expressed the wish to spare him a jail sentence, but he lost his drivers license for two years and was fined $4,000. We often remarked afterwards that both Jeff and Hazel ended up with a life sentence the way Jeff was now.

It took a while for us to get used to the busy traffic in Perth and in the process we made good use of the many highways that were now throughout Perth, making getting around a lot easier. Leading up to our departure for



The "Cat" in Brisbane.

Sydney for our cruise around Australia, I had been worried about the fact that at the time of making the booking of this cruise I had overlooked that during this trip our son Terry would be turning 50 years of age and we would not be there for him.

We thought of doing something special for him and through the booking agents I planned to have special boarding passes organized for Terry and Jeanette (whose birthday was on the same day as Terry's) to have lunch with us on board the Dawn Princess when the ship was in Fremantle. Being able to arrange this for them eased my mind a bit for missing out on his special birthday event on the 26th of September. While I was arranging this I also made the same arrangements for Brian and Esme when we would be calling in at Bunbury and the same for Dean and Tam when we would be in Albany. This was something to look forward to.

On the 3rd of September early in the morning we flew to Sydney to board the Dawn Princess. We got a nice cabin with a balcony which was located nearly mid-ship and close to a bank of three lifts. The dining rooms and the entertaining areas were very luxurious and obviously designed to impress. Beforehand you could book a number of excursions at any of the ports that we called in and we did that in most locations. While we were having our dinner the ship left the harbour on the way to the ocean to head for Brisbane as our first port of call. As we had been to Brisbane a few times before we decided to



Jumping crocodile in the Adelaide River in Darwin.

just look around for ourselves and we managed to get on the 'Cat', which was a fast moving 'people mover' boat service and very fascinating to be on. I can recommend it to you next time that you are in Brisbane and for little money you will see a lot of Brisbane.

I guess there must be at least eight of them on the water all the time. We never realized that only a few more months later a lot of all this around Brisbane would be severely flooded early into the next year. From Brisbane we moved on to Port Douglas after a full day at sea and were booked on a train tour called the Kuranda Scenic Railway and for that we were taken by coach to Freshwater Station near Cairns where we boarded this train. They don't call it a scenic rail trip for nothing because that was what it was with many good spots to see. At the start of the railway trip we were at about the 10 meter above sea level while at the top we were at 334 metres so you can see that was quite a climb for the train. The next interesting thing was the Skyrail Rainforest Cableway from Kuranda downhill to where we started with a halfway station where we had to change to another cable car.

This was an amazing experience going over the top of trees with great views in all directions as we were moving along.

The coach soon got us back on board of our cruise ship for our next call which was Darwin. We were booked there on a river cruise on the Adelaide River to see the jumping crocodiles and I thought that the continuous feeding



With Terry and Jeannette in the Atrium lounge of the ship.

of these animals made them somewhat lazy to jump but they still jumped half out of the water to grab some part of a carcass that was dangling on a string to stimulate them. They even had names for some of them.

There was a lot of on board entertainment in the evenings and some of the shows were quite good. Besides that there were always many films in the afternoons to keep you occupied in the theater at the front of the ship and also in the evening at the top deck overlooking the swimming pool. From Darwin the Dawn Princess sailed to Bali but we opted to stay on board. In Bali there were no harbour facilities so for those people that went on shore were taken there by the life boats of the Dawn Princess and it was interesting to see the launching of these rafts from their davits. After a couple of days on the ocean we landed in Broom where we were booked to visit the Willie Creek Pearl Farm. This turned out to be a very educational tour about the pearl industry as this had been going on for many years in the past in Broom. I ended up buying Riet a beautiful pearl on a ring to commemorate our visit to Broome and to let her know that I still loved her.

After another day at sea we landed in Fremantle where we had arranged, as I had already mentioned before, to meet Terry and Jeanette for a lunch on-board. And at the same time we gave them a tour of the cruise ship. Afterwards we had a look at the top Lido deck and then from that height we had a



The top deck of the Dawn Princess with the Sydney Harbour Bridge in the back ground.

good view over Fremantle and Johnson Court, the 10 storey building that I had built in the heart of Fremantle back in the late sixties, was very prominently seen from the cruise ship. This special visit for Terry and Jeanette was to make up for us missing out on his 50th birthday party a week later. By 10 o'clock that evening the Dawn Princess left for the short trip overnight to Bunbury. Now I had been in the Bunbury harbour before when I had taken my own Riviera cruiser there to put it on the slip for the yearly cleaning and anti-fowling job but never had I been there on a large ship like the Dawn Princess. It was different this time and it was great to see that our friends Brian and Esme Nichols were waiting to be escorted on board as per the special arrangements that I was able to make for them.

They enjoyed the tour of the ship with all the fineries and then the lunch that was on offer in the luxurious dining room. The day was gone before we knew it and we had to say goodbye to them after handing in their special passes that they had received at the start of their visit. Soon thereafter the Dawn Princess took to the sea again on her way to Albany. The next day we entered the Princes Royal Harbour and it was amazing how easy it seamed to maneuver this big ship into position against the quay allowing the workers to secure the anchoring ropes to tie the ship to the bollards. We soon had Dean and Tam on board making use of the special passes that were made available



The Flying Dutchman carrying a raw egg in the competition.

to them and again we went through the showing of the nice things that were making this cruise ship a class of its own. I almost felt like a salesman trying to sell the ship to now the third customer as if I had a “home open”, I should phrase that differently, as if had a “ship open”.

Dean and Tam had a lovely lunch with us and after spending some time on the top deck relaxing they also had to leave in the afternoon as the Dawn Princess was due to pull out by six o’clock for the next destination and that was Adelaide.

We thought that the trip to Adelaide was going to be rough on the ocean as the Bight, the sea area between Albany and Adelaide is so called, is notorious for that but it was pleasantly calm and everybody appreciated that. After another day at sea we got to Adelaide where we were booked to go to the Barossa Valley wineries, so that promised to be a lot of wine tasting. It also included a lunch at one of the wineries, Jacobs Creek, which went down well. This wine tour was an all day affair so shortly after boarding the ship again we left for Melbourne. The trip to Melbourne was an overnight affair and the Dawn Princess docked there by six in the morning. We were booked to go to the Dandenongs which was a region east of Melbourne and south of the famous Yarrah Yarrah Valley wine region.

Once we got to the Dandenongs we boarded the Puffing Billy Railway which was established in 1900. Even today, in the age of electric and diesel trains, it is undoubtedly one of Australia’s most popular train journeys.



Dean and Tam's Restaurant in Albany.

From there the coach took us to the wine region where we did what you are supposed to do and that was taste the various wines that were on offer. It was very interesting and at the same time entertaining as well.

By late in the afternoon we were back on board for our regular dinner in the dining room, while the crew was busy preparing to leave Melbourne for Burnie on the north west coast of Tasmania.

My youngest sister Anne and her husband Peter were living there and I had made arrangements to meet them there on the wharf the next morning. However when the Captain was trying to bring the ship into the fairly small harbour there was a strong wing about and the Captain, for safety's sake, abandoned bringing the ship all the way into the harbour and steamed back into the open sea on his way to Hobart, which was our next destination.

It was a shame as I had been looking forward to catching up with my sister. When we got to Hobart in the afternoon, ahead of schedule, I made use of a public telephone on shore to phone Anne and explain what had happened in the harbour of Burnie and suggested that I was willing to hire a car the next morning and drive over to see them but I was told that Peter had to go to hospital the next day for some medical procedure and they would not be there to see us. Bad luck that was but at least I tried.

It was pretty cold in Hobart when we went for a walk around so we soon got back on board where it was a lot warmer. Now I have to tell you about the on board competition. When we had left Darwin nearly two weeks before, they asked amongst the passengers for participants to compete in an egg drop-

ping competition. The idea was to make up a contraption in which to put a raw egg and than drop it in the Atrium two levels down without breaking this egg. (The Atrium was in the centre of the ship and three levels high) This competition was to take place when we were traveling from Hobart back to Sydney as that was the end of the cruise.

Since leaving Darwin I had put on my thinking cap and as I wanted to compete in this I decided to make a lightweight plane from light cardboard and cover it with blue paper that I got from the kids craft shop on the top deck. The egg was going to be located in the pilot's location all bedded in cotton wool. I made up a parachute with light plastic sheeting and attached that to the plane model. After leaving Hobart the competition was announced and there were about twelve contestants going for this. My plane had the Dutch colours, red, white and blue glued on them and I named the plane "The Flying Dutchman" painted on each side. Quite a few eggs did not survive the drop but mine did. In the end I came in second. There were a lot of spectators watching this event and it was good fun. I heard a few people saying that I deserved to win because of the plane that I had built but you know you can't win them all. I had fun taking part. The next day we were back in Sydney and ready to leave the ship.

While we were waiting for our turn to disembark the ship I went to the top deck and made a few photos of Sydney. We had had a great time for four weeks cruising around Australia and I was now looking forward to going back to golf again.

I am happy to report here that all the boys and their families are currently doing great and even Dean and Tam in Albany made a decision to upgrade their restaurant by buying the fitness center building in Stirling Terrace, next to the Police Station.

They spent about a year to convert it into a very impressive, much larger, restaurant with brand new kitchen facilities and a very noticeable front façade showing their new name:"Rustlers Steak and Grill" emblem. The restaurant was officially opened as from Saturday the 2nd of April 2011. They are now well known in the Albany community and I would say:"Good luck" to them.

It has been quite a long journey for me starting in 1932 back in Leiden, Holland. During my travels through life I was fortunate to meet a lot of good people who have taught me important values in life as I have tried to pass those on, by telling you about it.

I have had a very good guardian angel who was also my best friend and who looked after me in many ways and I am immensely grateful to her for that.

I have realized that life is not about how much you can get out of it but what you can put into it to make it all work and I love everyone in my family for just being my family!

I have enjoyed living my life.
I have enjoyed writing about it.
I hope that you have enjoyed reading it.

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Spanning eighty years and two continents, this is Henk Oorschot's life story.

From an impressional boy living in German occupied Holland during WWII, to a leading builder and property developer in Perth, Western Australia, his remarkably colourful story is told with humour and candour.

Achieving success in the 1960s, followed by his subsequent business collapse, Henk's story reveals how his fortune was slowly rebuilt through hard work, tenacity and the constant support of his family.

Denise Goodall B.Bus (Fin)

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